الحمد لله رب العالمين

In the name of Allāh,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
All praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds,
And peace and blessings be upon
His Messenger Muḥammad,
Mercy to the Worlds.

A Brief Biography of
SHAYKH AL-ḤADĪTH FAZLUR RAHMAN AZMI

A Brief Biography of SHAYKH AL-ḤADĪTH FAZLUR RAHMAN AZMI

SECOND EDITION

MUFTĪ ATIQUR RAHMAN AZMI

Translated by
Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Yusuf

MDH
MADRASAH
DA'WATUL HAQ

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To three great ḥadīth scholars

Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi

Shaykh Ḥafiẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi

Shaykh Fazlur Raḥman Azmi

TRANSLITERATION KEY

ء (أإ) ʾ (A slight catch in the breath. It is also used to indicate where the *hamza* has been dropped from the beginning of a word.)

ا a, ā

ب b

ت t

ث th (Should be pronounced as the *th* in *thin* or *thirst*.)

ج j

ح ḥ (Tensely breathed *h* sound.)

خ kh (Pronounced like the *ch* in Scottish *loch* with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

د d

ذ dh (Should be pronounced as the *th* in *this* or *that*.)

ر r

ز z

س s

ش sh

ص ṣ (A heavy *s* pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

ض ḍ (A heavy *d/dh* pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

ط ṭ (A heavy *t* pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

ظ ẓ (A heavy *dh* pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

ع ʿ, ʿa, ʿi, ʿu (Pronounced from the throat.)

غ gh (Pronounced like a throaty French *r* with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

ف f

ق q (A guttural *q* sound with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

ك k

ل l

م m

ن n

و w, ū, u.

ه h

ي y, ī, i

ﷺ *Ṣalla ʾLlāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*—used following the mention of the Messenger Muḥammad, translated as, "May Allāh bless him and give him peace."

عليه السلام *ʿAlayhi ʾl-sallam*—used following the mention of a prophet or messenger of Allāh, translated as, "May the peace of Allāh be upon him."

رضي الله عنه *Raḍiya ʾLlāhu ʿanhu*—used following the mention of a Companion of the Messenger ﷺ, translated as, "May Allāh be pleased with him."

رضي الله عنهم *Raḍiya ʾLlāhu ʿanhum*—used following the mention of more than one Companion of the Messenger (and also after a female Companion in this work for lack of an appropriate glyph), translated as, "May Allāh be pleased with them."

Contents

3. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth & His Contemporaries

4. Praise from Other Scholars

5. Publications

Translator's Note

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger Muḥammad, Mercy to the Worlds ﷺ.

Following the very positive response to the first edition of *A Brief Biography of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi* (translation of Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi's Urdu work, *Mukhtaṣar sawāniḥ Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi),* the second edition is now before you.

This edition contains further detail on Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's more recent services to the religion; his chain of transmission for the various modes of Qurʾānic recitation (*qirāʾāt*); a recollection of his late father (may Allāh have mercy on him) in Appendix II; an updated list of senior disciples (*khulafāʾ*), publications and other works; and the clarification of a few facts following further research by the author.

May the All-Mighty prolong Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's life, bless him in his knowledge, health, wealth and family and allow us all to benefit from him fully. *Āmīn*.

Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Yusuf
Jumādā Thāniya 8, 1434 | April 19, 2013

Author's Note

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh and He is sufficient, and peace be upon those servants whom He has chosen.

Some scholars have stated: 'Upon mention of the pious, mercy descends.' Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (may Allāh have mercy on him) has said: 'Stories of the scholars and mention of their qualities are more beloved to me than a great deal of *fiqh* as they involve the manner and character of people (Muḥāsibī, *Risālat al-mustarshidīn* pg. 12–13).

All praise is due to Allāh that this concise book is presented before the readers outlining my respected father's biography. Many individuals have helped in the preparation of this book and I thank them all from the bottom of my heart. May Allāh Most High reward them all in abundance and in accordance with His lofty status. May He make this humble effort a means of salvation and reward in the Hereafter and may He grant it acceptance in all quarters, for all people.

O Allāh, send salutations on the best of Your creation, Muḥammad ﷺ and all his family and Companions ﷺ. All praise is due to Allāh.

Atiqur Rahman Azmi
Azaadville, South Africa
Rajab 12, 1422 | September 30, 2001

Foreword 1

Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I am delighted to hear of your intention to compile a biography of your respected father (may Allāh protect him). I pray to Allāh Most High from the bottom of my heart that He make all stages of the process easy, right through to completion. *Āmīn.*

Studying the biographies of the pious is most beneficial for the reader. One can rectify oneself through reading them as the famous saying goes: 'Upon mention of the pious, mercy descends.' I am sure that your respected father's biography will, if Allāh wills, be of great use to students in particular and to the general public too.

Biographies generally come to light after the death of a pious individual, and this has been the case with our pious predecessors. Examples include the Physician of the Umma [Ashraf ʿAlī] Thānawī, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī, Shaykh ʿAlī Nadwī and Shaykh Daryābādī (may Allāh have mercy on them). Published biographies of pious people during their lifetime include those of Muftī Rashīd Aḥmad Ludhyānwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh protect him).

A writer acquaintance of mine wrote long eulogies for Shaykh Saʿīd Aḥmad Khān and Shaykh ʿAlī Nadwī (may Allāh have mercy on them)

in which he listed their achievements and exploits. When it was made available in booklet form to the general public, many commented that they wished it had been written during the lives of these individuals so people could have benefited from them directly. Therefore, if this biography of your respected father (may Allāh protect him) can be published in his lifetime, it would give an invaluable opportunity to those wishing to benefit from him to do so.

In conclusion, I wish you full success in this noble work and I request special *duʿāʾs* from you. And peace be with you,

[Shaykh] Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī
Dewsbury, UK

Foreword 2

Muftī Muhammad Saeed Motara

Lecturer of Ḥadīth and Senior Muftī
Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Azaadville, South Africa

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

The beauty of the skies lies in the stars
The beauty of the earth lies in the pious

When Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him), the respected son of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him) requested me to write my impressions of his father's personality, I took it as my good fortune and decided to muster up the courage to write a few words with regard to his greatness, respect, services rendered and love. I sincerely hope that it will be a means of reward in the Hereafter.

My teacher, the compassionate Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi's celebrated personality is not in need of introduction. Whilst on the one hand, Shaykh's passion for knowledge and absorption in it not only reminds one of the pious predecessors and is an invaluable asset, on the other hand, when it comes to practise and where piety is concerned, he is the Umma's priceless gem. Furthermore, where he showers pearls in the classroom and in the public arena, he also flies the flag of Ilyās

(may Allāh have mercy on him)[1] in the field of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh,* where he is a champion of the prophetic mission.

I first had the great fortune of meeting Shaykh al-Ḥadīth whilst a student at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya Taʿlīm al-Dīn, Dabhel, India. I can picture the moment now, as Shaykh al-Ḥadīth first stepped foot into the confines of the *madrasa*; the students were waiting restlessly for this teacher and he was a cause of great pride. The students were well acquainted with his illustrious personality well before he arrived and the desire and fervour surrounding his arrival caused the heart to beat faster. Then, suddenly, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth arrived and the *madrasa's* fortune was immediately brightened and there was no end to our happiness. The opportunity to sit before such a loving teacher who was the outstanding student of the ḥadīth master (*muḥaddith*) of the time, Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was a great blessing. The establishment had further grounds to be delighted—Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's saintly father, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh protect him) had, just a few years earlier, illuminated the name of the very same seminary as a teacher.

Our first impressions of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as students was that of a young, small-bodied individual, but it was in the classroom where his splendour was exhibited and we soon realised his calibre as a mountain of knowledge. On a personal level, I have benefited greatly from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, for which all praise is due to Allāh. I have had the good fortune of studying numerous books under him: *Sirājī, Sharḥ al-Nukhba, Sunan al-Nasāʾī,* the second volume of *Hidāya* and *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's lessons were always delivered in simple, straightforward language, and in a manner that made complex ideas and intricate themes easy to grasp.

From the time of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's residence in Dabhel he has had a deep connection and affiliation with the work of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh.*

1 In reference to Shaykh Muḥammad Ilyās (may Allāh have mercy on him), the founder of the *Jamāʿat Tablīgh* movement (translator).

If I recall correctly, it was in 1977 or 1978, after the *Godhra Ijtimāʿ*,[2] that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth became deeply involved in the work of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* and he would work tirelessly in Dabhel and the surrounding villages. Despite his scholarly commitments Shaykh al-Ḥadīth spread the message of Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ through his travels in the different corners and walkways of the region. The inhabitants of Dabhel and the adjacent villages of the district of Valsad have had a good relationship with him and until today feel the pain of separation and mourn his absence.

Amongst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's qualities, one particular praiseworthy trait is that in his services to the religion (*dīn*) he would never hesitate. I remember once, whilst studying in India, that people from the village of Sāyan in the Surat district asked me to request one of my teachers to speak at Friday prayers. I approached Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and he immediately accepted their invitation and enlightened the hearts of the locals with some of his precious advices.

Similarly, when the consultation (*shūrā*) committee of Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Darul Uloom Azaadville, South Africa convened and decided to extend the syllabus to include the [the *dawrat al-ḥadīth* as the sixth and] final year, the members of the board were unanimous in deciding to appoint Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as most senior lecturer in ḥadīth. His personality is so comprehensive that he would be able to see to the responsibilities of teaching ḥadīth and simultaneously accomplish the demands of fulfilling the *tablīghī* goals and nature of the *madrasa.* At the request of the board, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth immediately responded in the affirmative. When I came to know of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's acceptance there was no limit to my happiness, and the feeling was replicated by the Muslims of Africa; such a mountain of knowledge and practice has decided to set foot in a land of disbelief, scattering his pearls amongst its inhabitants! For me, it is undoubtedly an unexpected blessing; having

2 An *ijtimāʿ* in this context is a gathering in which Muslims involved in the *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* effort convene and listen to talks, culminating in the mission or *khurūj.* This particular gathering occurred in the town of Godhra, Gujarat, India (translator).

been in the shade of a loving teacher in India, now in my homeland I could attain it too. It was a means of contentment and fortune. All praise is due to Allāh for this.

All praise is due to Allāh, whatever acceptance has been granted to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in India has also been granted to him here in South Africa. May Allāh Most High keep Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's benevolent shade on us always, and together with the residents of Africa may all parts of the world and all creatures benefit from his knowledge and *fuyūḍ* (outpouring) in abundance. *Āmīn.*

[Muftī] Muhammad Saeed Motara
Azaadville, South Africa

Foreword 3

Muftī Ebrahim Desai

Senior Lecturer of Ḥadīth,
Durban, South Africa

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I hope that you are well. Your respected father's biography is currently being prepared for which I am delighted. I consider myself fortunate enough to participate. Unfortunately, due to numerous commitments I was unable to reply earlier.

Your respected father is my teacher and I began studying under him at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya Dabhel in 1984. In 1985 I studied *Safīnat al-bulaghā*ʾ and *Qutbī* in the fourth year [of the course] and the second volume of *Hidāya* in the fifth year. The effect of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's unique style was such that I memorised more or less every poem. When the lesson of *al-ashkāl al-arbaʿa* came in *Qutbī* (a notoriously difficult section in which the order of the words plays a hugely important role) a student requested Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to deliver the lesson in Arabic. He obliged and taught the entire lesson in fluent Arabic.

I was excited to study ḥadīth under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and when I was in my fifth year whenever the opportunity arose I would attend his lessons on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ,* delivered to the sixth year class. When

he left, it was the fifth, sixth and final year students of Jāmiʿa Dabhel who felt the sadness of his departure most.

In 1997 I was given the final ten portions of the second volume of [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-*]*Bukhārī* to teach in Madrasah Taleemuddeen, Isipingo Beach. In 1998, I was reading Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's *Hadiyyat al-darārī* during the last ten days of Ramaḍān. When I finished the book and was resting after Fajr I dreamt of Imām Bukhārī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He was clothed in green but his features and form was that of your respected father (may Allāh protect him). I also saw Ḥājī Bhāi Padia[3] (may Allāh have mercy on him) in the dream and he was reading something, though I can't recall exactly what he was reciting. Good dreams are from Allāh and I relay it in good faith. Had I not dreamt this, it would not have made the least bit of difference in my opinion of him.

May Allāh Most High give us the true appreciation of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's ocean of knowledge and may He grant us maximum benefit from him. *Āmīn.*

[The Shaykh's] student
EBRAHIM DESAI
(may Allāh forgive him and his parents)
Servant of Madrasah In'aamiyyah, Camperdown, Durban
Rabīʿ al-Awwal 9, 1422 | June 2, 2001

3 Ḥājī Bhāi Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) was the head (*amīr*) of the *Tablīgh Jamāʿat* effort in South Africa. He passed away on Monday 5th October 1998 (14 Jumādā Thāniya 1419) (translator).

Foreword 4

Shaykh Yusuf Bhula

I was a third year student of Arabic at Jāmiᶜa Islamiyya Dabhel and it was the first year your respected father took up the teaching post there. Small-bodied, wearing a *shērwānī*... the scene is in front of me now as we stood observing him walking to the principal's office from our classroom above. The students, as usual, began chatting away and some commented that he didn't seem like the senior type, with the splendour and entourage to match. On the contrary, there was even a student from South Africa who was noticeably bigger. We even said to him that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth looks younger than you do. But after that, well, what can I say! We had the good fortune of studying under him in his very first year during which he taught us a few of the third year books. Oh what fun we had! An ocean of knowledge and a style of oratory that my words cannot express. What more needs to be said? As my class and I progressed through the course, each year we had the great fortune of studying with him. His humility and soft-heartedness was such that I still recall the way he cried during the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* lesson whilst speaking on the Hellfire.

I also studied *Sunan al-Nasāʾī* with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. As ever, he was punctual, giving due right to every book he taught. There was no favouritism; all students were seen as equal, regardless of their back-

ground. He would not fall prey to flattery, nor subscribe to it, and he would not stand in awe of anyone and would not shy from speaking the truth.

Despite his innumerable academic commitments, he would travel to the villages for *daʿwa and tablīgh.* He would often travel especially to my village of Kaflētā to give talks. One of my beloved teachers there who taught in the *maktab* (children's *madrasa*) and who was also my relative was Shaykh Ibrāhīm Rājā, a student of Shaykh Badre ʿĀlam Mīrathī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He would often invite your respected father. In actual fact, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Rājā's son attained an *isnād* (chain of transmission) in *tajwīd* (laws of Qurʾānic recitation) from your grandfather, due to which he had great affection for your father.

Whenever your father would grace our village he would speak to the public in a very simple tongue, expounding to them knowledge of the religion (*dīn*). This is in fact the nature of *daʿwa*; when one has an opportunity one should speak of the religion. Recently, when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth came to America he said to me: 'Molwī Yūsuf! The people's ears are also a trust. When people come to the mosque you should fulfil that trust by conveying a few words to them regarding the religion. If these people didn't come at all, then whom would you address?'

Whenever I wrote a letter to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth he would always reply with invaluable advices. I enclose photocopies of our correspondence. I urge you to publish them, they would be of immense benefit to the Umma.

In 1986 when I was going out in *tablīgh* for one year, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth accompanied me personally to the bus stop in Dabhel and made lots of *duʿāʾ* for me. Such a great Shaykh al-Ḥadīth showing such humility and consideration to a lowly student like me is a rare occurrence nowadays. Whenever he comes to Lodi I request him to rest in comfort at home, to which he always replies that he prefers sleeping on the floor with the *tablīghī jamāʿat*. With such humility, it is little wonder that Allāh has granted him such honour. Allāh has sent him to many countries around the world to spread the word of His Religion.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth always speaks of uniting the work of *daʿwa and tablīgh* and *taṣawwuf* (spirituality) in one's life, as more often than not they are distanced. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth makes particular effort in inviting the scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) to the effort of *daʿwa and tablīgh*.

This weak servant
YUSUF BHULA
California, USA
Muḥarram 29, 1422 | April 23, 2001

Introduction

Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī

It is from amongst the great blessings of Allāh that such a worthless and sinful person like myself could be bestowed with such great teachers. The academic abilities, talent, piety, purity, and sincerity of whom, was one to write on them, would most definitely fill a voluminous book.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth (may Allāh protect him) is also from amongst those esteemed teachers who possess expertise, proficiency, breadth and depth of knowledge in all fields. This, coupled with his God-given, unique style of explanation, which even the weakest of students can appreciate, are qualities which only the students of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth can attest to.

The writer has had the opportunity to study over ten books under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. During his numerous trips to the UK, I managed to stay in his company and on two or three occasions was fortunate enough to be with him for long periods of time. All praise is due to Allāh, my love and admiration for him increased at each instance. It must be said that this is not the case with everyone; there may be some with whom one may have confidence initially, but when meeting them in person and spending time with them, this confidence soon dwindles, sometimes ending altogether.

Allāh has not only adorned Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's outward form with knowledge, but He has also illuminated his inward spirit with knowledge. I have witnessed with my own eyes Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's humility and modesty, his regularity and punctuality in his practices and *adhkār* (remembrances), and the tears shed out of concern for the welfare of humanity.

I was once in London when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was preparing to leave for *ʿumra*. Those present requested him to make *duʿāʾ* before leaving and he obliged. He made such a *duʿāʾ* that to this day I remember it clearly.[4] It was so moving that at times he was unable to utter the words; everybody present was in tears. The characteristics of the *duʿāʾs* of the pious were found in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's *duʿāʾ*.

One can gauge his humility from the experience I had when I wrote to him requesting an introduction to a commentary I had written on the book *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ*. He kindly agreed and also wrote a note saying that I should leave his name just as he had written it, insisting I do not add any titles such as 'Mawlānā' (our leader) before it. He also asked me to correct any mistakes I found in it.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has always shown his kindness and assistance. In particular, his guidance with regard to the commentary on *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* will always be appreciated and remembered. I decided to commence work on this book and with the guidance of Allāh some progress was made. However, due to my meagre knowledge I was restless and felt the need for one of my teachers to edit it. I decided to approach Shaykh al-Ḥadīth for this task as I could think of no one else but him. The reason was simple; numerous individuals hadn't encountered the book or read it, let alone taught it. He had done so, and for many years at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel.

A point worthy of mention here is that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's acceptance as a master-teacher is attested by one and all. When students are

4 I have also witnessed this. Once, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was teaching *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and he described *ḥajj* in a most unique way that tears began to flow from his eyes.

handed their timetable they are anxious to know how many books they can look forward to studying under him. In reality, students never tire in his lessons and no matter which subject he teaches, his lessons are always captivating. His punctuality meant that there was never a frantic rush to complete the amount required in the syllabus at the end of the year. During his lessons of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* he would offer such delightful translations of the various poems and exercises, and his explanation would be so enthralling, that it would bring a smile to the students' faces. It was only when the bell would ring that we would realise that an hour had passed, so absorbed we were.

I have strayed from the topic! I was discussing how the commentary of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* came about. I would work on a few pages of text and send it to be checked by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. He would correct where necessary and would always offer beneficial advice. In this way he checked and corrected the entire commentary. Had it not been for his edit, the book would not have been worthy of publishing. After the corrections I requested him to write an introduction, and suggested the name *'Khazīnat al-ṭalabāʾ, sharḥ Urdu Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ'* for consideration, or any other alternative he felt appropriate. He replied and suggested *'Tuḥfat al-ṭalabāʾ, sharḥ Urdu Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ', 'Dalīl al-ṭalabāʾ'* or '*Dalāl al-ṭalabāʾ*'. Thus *Tuḥfat al-ṭalabāʾ* was decided.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, despite all his commitments spent time correcting this commentary. I pray to Allāh that He rewards him fully in this world and the Hereafter. He also undertook this task at a time when his interest had changed; had it been during his time at Dabhel or had he still been teaching the book, the task would undoubtedly be much easier. However, his occupation is now with ḥadīth and *tafsīr* (Qurʾānic exegesis). He alluded to this in one of his correspondences to me: 'I am delighted at commencing this work. From it, if Allāh wills, my ability will develop. However much I can help, I will do so, and it will also be beneficial for me as my interests have now changed.'

I first noticed Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's relationship with the effort of *daʿwa and tablīgh* of Shaykh Muḥammad Ilyās (may Allāh have

mercy on him) whilst at Dabhel. After moving to South Africa it only increased. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth currently plays an indispensable role and is an important pillar for the effort there. His talks are often based on this effort [*daʿwa* and *tablīgh*], which he explains from the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. Creating the enthusiasm for the religion in the Umma has become the purpose of his life.

One of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's noteworthy qualities, certainly worth imitating, is his passion for research. Whether discussing *masāʾil* (religious rulings) of the religion or general daily affairs through his writings or speeches, he always backs them with sound research. He also personally advised me to always reference my work, as non-referenced work carries little weight. This quality can be seen in his publications where he quotes the page numbers of various books of *fiqh* and ḥadīth and the publishers too. Resultantly, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has thoroughly investigated many of those practices and ideas that have become widespread in the Umma despite being based on a weak or fabricated basis and he has clearly established their true status. Examples include:

(1) Fasting on the fifteenth of Shaʿbān is commonly cited as *sunna*. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has established, through the opinions of the classical and contemporary ḥadīth scholars that this fast is neither *sunna*[5] nor *mustaḥab*. The reference for it can only be found in a very weak narration of *Sunan Ibn Māja*. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has collected the opinions of the ḥadīth scholars on this and published a booklet treatise on it.

(2) Similarly, he also mentioned in one gathering that he searched through the books of ḥadīth for the famous *duʿāʾ* before eating: '*bismillāh wa ʿalā barakatillāh*' (In the name of Allāh and upon the blessing of Allāh), but could not find it worded as such. Once I mentioned to him in his travels here that the *duʿāʾ* is mentioned in *Ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣīn*

5 He has only objected to the fact that it be classified as *sunna* since one can fast on the day with the intention of voluntary (*nafl*) worship. He has written 'Fasting is a good act and therefore one should fast. The question is simply whether one should have the intention of *sunna* or *nafl*. I have written that one can fast on this day with the intention of a *nafl* act.' (*Shab-e barā'at kī haqīqat* (The reality of the fifteenth of Shaʿbān) pg. 21 and 31).

with [*Al-Mustadrak* of] Ḥākim as the reference, to which he replied, 'This *duʿāʾ*, in those exact words [i.e., *bismillāh wa ʿalā barakatillāh*] is not found in *Ḥākim* in any of the various editions.'[6]

He once mentioned in a gathering that there should be [published] compilations in Urdu of fabricated ḥadīths. He also emphasised the need for articles to be published with good research on the various oft-quoted yet unfounded ḥadīths.

Due to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's capacity as a leading authority on ḥadīth, I requested him to devote some attention to completing Shaykh [Yūsuf] Binnōrī's commentary on *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Maʿārif al-Sunan* as well as Shaykh Yūsuf Kāndhlawī's *Amānī ʾl-aḥbār.* It is not unlikely that Allāh Most High employ Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to complete this blessed work. I am sure that he will intend to commence this work, if Allāh wills, as without doubt it would be of great benefit to all. His response to my request was: 'Completing *Maʿārif al-Sunan* and *Amānī ʾl-aḥbār* is currently beyond my control,' followed by the Persian maxim: 'Only I know what I really am. Nevertheless make *duʿāʾ*, if Allāh decides to employ me for this work then I am ready.'

The chain of transmission (*isnād*) in ḥadīth that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was granted from his various teachers is mentioned in detail in his book *Hadiyyat al-aḥwadhī li ṭālib Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* (pg. 119) and in his other publication *Hadiyyat al-darārī li ṭālib Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām al-Bukhārī* (pg. 201). He also received permission from his teacher, the great ḥadīth scholar, Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) to transmit the *Risālat al-awāʾil* (of the great ḥadīth scholar and jurist Shaykh Muḥammad Saʿīd b. Sunbul al-Makkī (may Allāh have mercy on him)).[7] I also read this entire collection in a gathering with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and he granted me authorization (*ijāza*) to transmit it as mentioned below:

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6 What Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was highlighting was that the actual *duʿāʾ* in *Ḥākim* appears as *'bismillāh wa barakatillāh'* without the word *"alā'* (upon) (translator).

7 A compilation of the opening narrations of forty Ḥadīth collections (translator).

> In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I say, whilst first praising Allāh and asking Him to send peace and blessings on His Messenger, that our distinguished brother, Marghūb Aḥmad was present when this collection (*risāla*) was being read and I have granted him permission in the same manner that was granted to me by my Shaykh Muḥaddith [Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān] Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him).
>
> Fazlur Rahman Azmi, UK
> Ramaḍān 28, 1419 | January 16, 1999

I mention these few lines here so that those readers who are enthusiastic about attaining authorisation (*ijāza*) of ḥadīth transmissions from him can attain this great blessing from him during his lifetime.

Whenever and wherever I have spent time with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, it quickly dawned upon me that he is very conscious of following the *sunna.* He researches the various *sunnas,* practices accordingly and then relays this knowledge to others. In his speeches and writings he has highlighted several *sunnas* that have been completely abandoned or are practised rarely and, to a great extent, he has managed to revive them once again. For example, the proper repose to be observed in *jalsa*[8] and in *qawma*[9] that is abandoned by many people, despite their observance not just being *sunna,* but *wājib* (compulsory) according to the jurists. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has written a thoroughly researched booklet on this matter and often alludes to its importance in his talks. Through this, many people have corrected this common mistake and have begun to observe the proper repose in these postures. Furthermore, he has publicised the *duʿāʾs* to be recited in *qawma* and *jalsa* that have been narrated in the ḥadīth, which help one in correcting these postures. The *duʿāʾ* for *qawma* is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْأَ السَّمٰاوَاتِ وَمِلْأَ الْاَرْضِ وَ مِلْأَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ

8 The sitting posture in between the two prostrations (*sajdas*) of *ṣalāt* (translator).

9 The standing position after bowing (*rukūʿ*) in *ṣalāt* (translator).

O Allāh! Our Lord, to You be the praise that would fill the heavens and the earth and that which pleases You besides (them) (*Muslim* 1:190).

And in one narration:

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْأَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِلْأَ الْأَرْضِ وَمِلْأَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمِلْأَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ بَعْدُ

Our Lord! To You be the praise that would fill the heavens and the earth and that which is between them, and that which pleases You besides (them) (*Tirmidhī* 1:16, 2:180).

The *duʿāʾ* for *jalsa* is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْلِيْ وَارْحَمْنِيْ وَ عَافِنِيْ وَ اهْدِنِيْ وَ ارْزُقْنِيْ

O Allāh! Forgive me and have mercy on me, grant me wellbeing and guide me, and sustain me (*Abū Dāwūd* 1:123).

I humbly urge readers to study Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's two booklets entitled: *Namāz kī pābandī awr uskī ḥifāẓat* (Punctuality in prayer and safeguarding it) and *Qawma wa jalsa mē iṭmiʾnān kā wujūb awr in dōnō mē adhkār kā thubūt* (The obligation of composure in *qawma* and *jalsa* and the proof of the supplications in them both). I request the *imāms* and scholars in particular to study these publications so that they, together with their congregations, can correct their prayers.

The *sunna* of joining ones' heels in *sajda* has unfortunately also been overlooked by many. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth says, 'It is also *sunna* to join the two heels together in *sajda* as related in *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma* (1:328) and *Iʿlāʾ al-Sunan* (3:32). The correct method is to ensure that the two feet are brought together and the heels and ankles touch. The two feet should be kept upright and the toes should be facing the *qibla*'[10] (*Namāz kī pābandī awr us kī ḥifāẓat* pg. 20).

10 The joining of the heels in *sajda* has also been classified as *sunna* by ʿAllāma Ibn ʿĀbidīn al-Shāmī, ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, and Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on them) and others.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has highlighted this in various talks and writings and this has, all praise be to Allāh, made a profound impact on the practice of many.

May Allāh Most High grant him a long life and bestow him with good health and strength.

[Shaykh] Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī

Chapter 1

BIRTH, FAMILY & EDUCATION

Birth, Name and Family

His lineage is as follows: Fazlur Rahman, son of Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān, son of Muḥammad Saʿīd, son of Dāwūd son of Nūr Muḥammad. He was born on Ṣafar 14, 1366 (January 7, 1947), in Maunath Bhanjan (more commonly known as Mau) in UP, India.[11]

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's respected father, Shaykh Muftī Qārī Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi (b. 1345/1926) is from amongst the famous scholars of Mau and is known as 'Qārī Ṣāḥib.' He is also one of the students of the illustrious scholar, Muḥaddith Kabīr (Great Ḥadīth Scholar) Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi[12] (may Allāh have mercy on him). He studied

11 Maunath Bhanjan (Mau) was originally a small town in Azamgarh but in 1988 became an independent district. There is an abundance of *madrasas* and scholars there, with seven or eight Darul Ulooms and approximately one hundred and seventy five mosques. Muḥaddith Kabīr, Shaykh Muḥammad Manẓūr Nuʿmānī, Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi (former Head Muftī at Darul Uloom Deoband) (may Allāh have mercy on them), and Muftī Ẓafīr al-Dīn (the compiler of *Fatāwā Darul Uloom Deoband*) (may Allāh protect him) have all studied there. The work of *daʿwa and tablīgh* has also reached a high level. All praise is due to Allāh.

12 Muḥaddith Kabīr Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Mau in 1319/1901 and his father's name is Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣābir. His father was a disciple (*murīd*) of the Physician of the Umma Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and passed away in 1365/1946. Muḥaddith Kabīr was educated mostly in his local area by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Mauī (may Allāh have mercy on him) (d. 1341/1923) who was the student of Shaykh Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and by Shaykh Karīm Bakhsh Sanbhalī (may Allāh have mercy on him) (d. 1361/1943) who was a student of Shaykh al-Hind (may Allāh have mercy on him). He also studied for a while at Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm, Varanasi (Banārās) and Darul Uloom Deoband where his teachers included the illustrious personalities of ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, ʿAllāma Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUthmānī and

numerous books under him, including *ʿIlm al-ṣīgha, Sharḥ al-Wiqāya, Dīwān al-Mutanabbī, Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, Jalālayn, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī.* From 1384–1388 (1965–1969) he remained the Head Qārī at Jāmiʿa Dabhel and many people benefited from him. Such people include Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā (principal of Jāmiʿa ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, Jambusar, Bharuch, Gujarat, India), Shaykh Yūnus Bande Ilāhī (of Leicester, UK), Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʾūf Ṣūfī Lājpūrī (imām of a mosque in Batley, UK).

When Muḥaddith Kabīr established Madrasa Mirqāt al-ʿUlūm in Mau, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi also moved there with him. There, together with the responsibility of teaching in the *Iftāʾ*[13] program, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān also taught *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and he remained Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and Muftī there until his demise (may Allāh have mercy on him). The former head Muftī of Darul Uloom Deoband, Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi used to say that two individuals remained completed devoted to Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). The first was Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār Azmi,[14] and the other was Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi.

Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi was a disciple (*murīd*) of Shaykh al-Islām Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He

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Muftī ʿAziz al-Raḥmān ʿUthmānī (may Allāh have mercy on them). Thereafter, he rendered great service in many *madrasas,* in particular, Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm and Mirqāt al-ʿUlūm (both Mau). He passed away on Ramaḍān 10, 1412/March 15, 1992 (see *Ḥayāt Abū 'l-Ma'āthir* and *Tarjumān al-Sunna*).

13 Specialized training in answering legal questions (translator).

14 Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in approximately 1323/1905 in Mau. He was educated at Darul Uloom Mau and Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm, Varanasi (Banārās) and was a student of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). After graduating he became a teacher at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau, then Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm, Varanasi, and thereafter Mirqāt al-ʿUlūm, Mau where he was appointed the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. He retained this post until he passed away. Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm he wrote a book rectifying the mistakes found in the marginalia of the commonly available edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* entitled *al-Taṣwībāt li mā fī ḥawāshī al-Bukhārī min al-taṣḥīfāt,* which has now been published. He also translated *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa ʾl-riqāq* into Urdu, which he called *Īthār-e ākhirat* (preference for the Hereafter). He passed away in Mau on Rajab 17, 1414 (December 31, 1993) to the sound of the *adhān* of Friday prayers (see *Al-Ma'āthir* Rajab 1414 and *Ḥayāt Abū 'l-Ma'āthir*).

benefited greatly from him and his Shaykh had great love for him too and would like listening to his recitation of the Qurʾān.

Some of Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi's works include: (1) *Iḥyāʾ al-Sunan—Namāz parhnē kā masnūn ṭarīqa* (Reviving the *sunnas*—The *sunna* method of performing prayer). (2) *Ba waqte iqāmat muqtadī kab kharē hō?* (When should a *muqtadī* stand upon hearing the call to commence?) (3) *Iʿlāʾ al-Sunna* (Elevating the *Sunna*), which answers objections raised by those who do not follow a school of Islamic law (*ghayr muqallidīn*) regarding *tarāwīḥ* (4) *Taqlīd awr ghayr muqallidīn* (*Taqlīd* and those who do not do *taqlīḍ*) (5) *Firqa ghayr muqallidīn* (The *Ghayr Muqallid* Sect). The last two works have been published together.

Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi also supervised the Urdu translation of Ibn al-Mubārak's *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa ʾl-riqāq* undertaken by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) who named it *Īthār-e ākhirat* (Preference for the Hereafter).

Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi also travelled a few times to South Africa and on one occasion made the completion of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* there. In his native Mau he was widely accepted in both public and scholarly quarters and he often visited peoples' home and workplaces holding religious discussions. Discussions regarding the prayer (*ṣalāt*) were also accompanied by practical demonstrations, and on the appropriate occasions religious rulings (*masāʾil*) of *Ḥajj* and fasting were often explained. Another *madrasa* also ran under his patronage and his effort in this regard was astonishing considering his old age.

Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi passed away on Shawwāl 2, 1430 (September 22, 2009) at about noon (may Allāh have mercy on him). The funeral prayer was held after the ʿAṣr prayer and approximately 20–25,000 people attended. Locals mentioned that there had not been such a large congregation for a funeral prayer since that of Muḥaddith Kabīr Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him), and that hats, shoes and slippers were easily lost on account of the large numbers.

Initial Education

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi's entire education was undertaken in Mau. He studied basic Arabic and Urdu under the stewardship of his father. Upon completion, to facilitate the educational needs of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and two other students a new *maktab* (children's *madrasa*) called Taʿlīm al-Dīn was established. The three, as a blessing, read the Qurʾān to a famous personality of that time, Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi.[15] Nevertheless, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's first teacher was his father, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi, with whom he completed the initial recitation (*nāẓira*) and subsequently the memorization of the Qurʾān (*ḥifẓ*). In this same *maktab* another teacher, namely Munshī Muʿīn al-Dīn[16] taught him the first three levels of elementary Urdu. After that, he completed levels four and five in two years at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau.

Persian and Arabic Education

In the next two years, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth learned Persian and thereafter exerted himself in the Arabic aspect of the course, to the extent that he came top of the class in his final year (*dawrat al-ḥadīth*) which he completed in 1386/1966. He also committed some books to memory, such as the text (*matn*) of *Sharḥ al-Tahdhīb,* called *Tahdhīb al-Manṭiq*.

15 Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him): His father's name is Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ṣiddīq. Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi was born in 1327/1909 and completed his elementary education at Darul Uloom Mau. At the age of 18 he studied *tajwīd* according to the *riwāya* of Ḥafṣ and thereafter studied the seven modes of recitation (*qirāʾāt sabʿa*) with Qārī Riyāsat ʿAli for two years. He then went on to become the Shaykh of Tajwīd at Darul Uloom Mau. His mere presence was a means of goodness and blessing for the *madrasa*. He had a powerful and attractive voice. He passed away in Rabīʿ Thānī, 1390/June, 1970 at the age of 63 [Islamic years] (*Tadhkira qāri'īn-e Hind*).

16 He later married the eldest daughter of Munshījī. Munshījī was a teacher at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau.

ʿMunshī and ʿĀlim Examinations

In the final two years of his studies, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth took the *ʿālim* examination. He made preparations from the fifth year for his final year exams which he wrote in 1386/1966 in Allahabad. He attained a first-class certification from the Allahabad Examination Board. Similarly, in six or seven months he prepared for the Munshī Examination,[17] which he wrote in 1388/1968 and in which he gained a first-class certification.

Tajwīd and Ḥadr

During his Arabic studies he would also learn the laws of reciting the Qurʾān (*tajwīd*) and practically demonstrate its application through recitation (*ḥadr*). He completed this recitation with Qārī ʿAbd al-Mannān[18] and through this he attained expertise in it. At that time many of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's class fellows had quickly completed their recitation, however his teacher would listen to his recitation conscientiously, small portions at a time, because his intonation was good. On a few occasions, his teacher praised him, and it was in the fourth year of Arabic class that he completed his recitation.

Takhaṣṣuṣ (Specialization)

After graduating from his Arabic studies Shaykh al-Ḥadīth exerted himself in different fields. This included advanced recitation classes

17 This refers to the art of writing and calligraphy (translator).

18 Qārī ʿAbd al-Mannān (may Allāh have mercy on him): He was a resident of Phatān Tola, Mau. He was one of the senior teachers of *tajwīd* and *qirā'a* at Madrasa Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm. He was bedridden for a number of years and on Jumādā Ūlā 18, 1414/November 4, 1993, at around 10am, he passed away. The late Qārī was an excellent teacher of *tajwīd* and would recite the Qurʾān beautifully. He would often touch listeners with his recitation and maintained the gaiety in his voice during his old age. His students are numerous (see *Al-Ma'āthir* and *Ḥayāt Abū 'l-Ma'āthir)*.

involving the *sabʿa* (seven) and *ʿashara* (ten) modes of Qurʾānic recitation (*qirāʾa*). He completed this by Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi, who was Shaykh al-Tajwīd at Darul Uloom Mau and the student of Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Baḥrābādī[19] (may Allāh have mercy on them). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then studied the book *Taysīr* with Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī and once this was complete he moved on to *Shāṭbiyya* where he would often be asked to translate and read for the class. Where the need arose, Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī would interject, otherwise Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would prepare and decipher the text before coming to class. He completed the book in one and a half months.

During the completion of the seven modes of Qurʾānic recitation (*qirāʾāt sabʿa*) which was overseen by Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was reading when the teacher corrected a mistake. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth hesitated, suggesting that he had not in fact erred. When other books were consulted, it became apparent that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was in fact correct and his teacher was mistaken. His teachers were greatly impressed and news of this incident soon spread, to the extent that the *madrasa* in which Qārī Muṣṭafā (may Allāh have mercy on him) was working (Darul Uloom Mau), offered Shaykh al-Ḥadīth the post of teaching *qirāʾa,* however his family refused on account of his ill

19 Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī (may Allāh have mercy on him): His father's name is ʿAbd al-Ra'ūf. He was born in 1317/1899 and memorized the Qurʾān and studied various Persian and Arabic books at Madrasa ʿĀliya Furqāniyya, Lucknow. He then went on to study *tajwīd* according to the *riwāya* (narration) of Ḥafṣ with his teacher Qārī Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Mayman-Sanghī (d. 1349/1930). Thereafter, he studied the seven modes of Qurʾānic recitation with Shaykh al-Qirāʾa Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiāʾ al-Dīn (d. 1371 /1952) son of Shaykh Munshī ʿAbd al-Razzāq at Madrasa Subḥāniyya, Allahabad. He was an exceptional student and extremely intelligent. After graduating from Allahabad he began teaching *tajwīd* and *qirāʾa* at Madrasa Ishāʿat al-ʿUlūm, Bānas, Bareilly. Thereafter he taught at Madrasa ʿArabiyya, Ghazipur, eventually taking a post of Shaykh al-Tajwīd and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Mau where he also benefited from the company of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). He wrote a book entitled *Khulāṣat al-Tajwīd* which has been published with accompanying footnotes by his student, Qārī Muṣṭafā. He passed away on Dhū ʾl-Ḥijja 14, 1391/January 31, 1972 (see *Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir*, *Tadhkira qāriʾīn-e Hind* (abridged) and *Tadhkira Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī*).

health at that time. 'This is the grace of Allāh which He bestows upon whom He wishes' (Qurʾān 5:54).

Authorisation (Ijāza) for Transmitting Modes of Qurʾānic Recitation (Qirāʾāt)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi completed studies in the laws of reciting the Qurʾān (*tajwīd*) and the recitation (*qirāʾa*) of Ḥafṣ with Qārī ʿAbd al-Mannān Mauī (may Allāh have mercy on him), teacher at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was then authorized in transmitting the *sabʿa* (seven) and *ʿashara* (ten) modes of Qurʾānic recitation (*qirāʾa*) by Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him), who was authorized (along with Qārī ʿAbd al-Mannān Mauī) by Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Baḥrābādī (may Allāh have mercy on him). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also has direct authorization from Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Baḥrābādī. Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Baḥrābādī studied *tajwīd* and the *qirāʾa* of Ḥafṣ with Qārī Muḥammad Ṣiddīq (may Allāh have mercy on him), and was authorized in the *sabʿa* and *ʿashara qirāʾāt* by Qārī Ẓiā al-Dīn Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him). Qārī Muḥammad Ṣiddīq studied *tajwīd* and the *qirāʾa* of Ḥafṣ with Qārī Muḥammad Abdullah (brother of Qārī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, author of *Fawāʾid Makkiyya*) (may Allāh have mercy on them), and was authorized in the *sabʿa qirāʾāt* by Qārī Ẓiā al-Dīn Aḥmad and *ʿashara qirāʾāt* by Qārī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (on the paths of *Durra* and *Ṭayyiba*). Qārī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's chain of transmission can be found in the work *Khulāṣat al-Bayān.*

Completion in Other Fields

In the same year Shaykh al-Ḥadīth studied *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* with Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Nuʿmānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and a portion of *Tafsīr al-Nasafī* (*Madārik al-tanzīl*).

At that time, with the encouragement of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) a faculty of *takhaṣṣuṣ* (specialization) in ḥadīth was established at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth enrolled with one other individual who soon had to leave due an illness. Interestingly, no other student joined this department thereafter, suggesting that this department had been established especially for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth by divine decree. He studied there for two and a half years, during which he was given the responsibility of teaching a few elementary Arabic and Persian books. In his spare time Shaykh al-Ḥadīth completed the study of the voluminous *Radd al-muḥtār ʿalā ʾl-Durr al-mukhtār* (more commonly known in the Indian Subcontinent as *Shāmī*), as well as a few other books. Under the supervision of Muḥaddith Kabīr Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also practised the art of *fatwā* writing. Muḥaddith Kabīr would give him questions and he would search for answers. He was also instructed to write two books: (1) *Sīrat al-Imām Abū Yūsuf* (yet unpublished) and (2) A response to a *ghayr muqallid* work entitled *Anhār majmūʿa*, written as a critique of Muḥaddith Kabīr's two books entitled *Aʿlām marfūʿa* and *Azhār marbūʿa*.

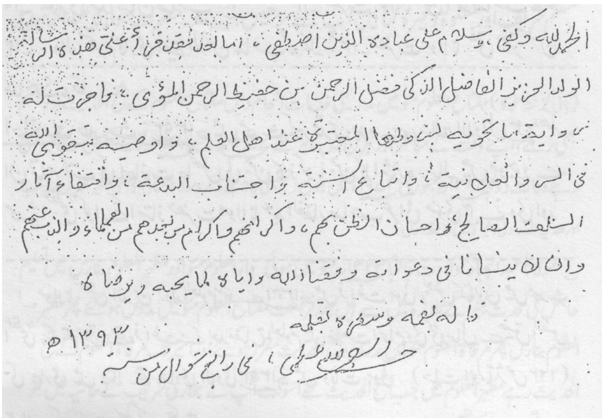
Authorisation for Transmitting Ḥadīth

In 1393/1973 Shaykh al-Ḥadīth read *Risālat al-awāʾil* with Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) and attained authorization from him. Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) had authorization from his teacher Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār ʿIrāqī Mauwi,[20] who

20 Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār son of Shaykh Turāb ʿAlī ʿIrāqī Mauī al-Ḥanafī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born on Ṣafar 2, 1283/June 15, 1866 in Aurangabad, Mau. His teachers include Shaykh Jāmal al-Dīn Mauī, Shaykh Fayḍ Allāh Mauī, Shaykh Ḥakīm ʿAbd Allāh Mujaddidī (the student of Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī), Shaykh ʿAbd al-Aḥad (the student of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Farangī Maḥallī), and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaq (may Allāh have mercy on them). He studied the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta* (the six authentic books of Ḥadīth) under Shaykh Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He passed away in 1341/1923 in Mau (*Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir*).

had authorization from Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaq Ilāhabādī[21] (may Allāh have mercy on them). The details of this chain (*isnād*) can be found in *Risālat al-awāʾil* and brief biographies of these personalities in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's work *Muqaddima-e Bukhārī* (Urdu).

A copy of this chain of transmission can be found below:



الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى، اما بعد فقد قرأ علي هذه الرسالة
الولد العزيز الفاضل الذكي فضل الرحمن بن حفيظ الرحمن المؤوي فاجزت له
روايتها بما تحويه بشروطها المعتبرة عند اهل العلم، واوصيه بتقوى الله
في السر والعلانية، واتباع السنة، واجتناب البدعة، واقتفاء آثار
السلف الصالح، واحسان الظن بهم، واكرامهم واكرام من نجدهم من العلماء والذب عنهم
وان لا ينسانا في دعواته وفقنا الله واياه لما يحبه ويرضاه
دعا له بفمه وسطره بقلمه
[illegible] في رابع شوال من سنة ١٣٩٣ هـ

Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was at Dabhel, Qārī Ṭayyib (may Allāh have mercy on him) visited one day and taught a class on Shāh Walī Allāh's (may Allāh have mercy on him) *Musalsalāt bi ʾl-awwaliyya,* in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was also present. Therefore, he also received authorization for it. Qārī Ṭayyib (may Allāh have mercy on him) had studied this under Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and been authorized by him.

These special authorizations (*ijāzas*) are aside from the Madrasa's general authorization provided to graduates, in which all current books are included.

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21 Shaykh al-Dalāʾil ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Ilāhabādī Muhājir Makkī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Allahabad. He studied under Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Dihlawī and Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī (may Allāh have mercy on them). He passed away on Shawwāl 19, 1333/ August 30, 1915 in Makka and is buried near the grave of Shaykh Raḥmat Allāh Kīrānwī in the Jannat al-Maʿallāt cemetery (see *Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir* and *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*).

Teachers (Asātidha)
(May Allāh have mercy on them)

The teachers under whom Shaykh al-Ḥadīth studied in his home town include:

1. Muḥaddith Kabīr Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him), with whom he studied parts of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and a few other books not included in the general syllabus. He also read *Risālat al-awāʾil*[22] and attained an *isnād* in it. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also benefited from him greatly at a personal level. If Allāh so wills, a few incidents will be mentioned later in this regard.
2. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Nuʿmānī Azmi[23] (may Allāh have mercy on him), with whom he studied most of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Sunan Abū Dāwūd,* a portion of *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasāʾī* and *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī.*
3. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Bārī Qāsmī (may Allāh have mercy on him), former Muftī of Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm Maywān, under whom he studied the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* and *Hidāya.*
4. Shaykh Irshād al-Ḥaq (may Allāh protect him).
5. Qārī Aḥmad Allāh Qāsmī (may Allāh have mercy on him).
6. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) with whom he studied *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī, Ḥamāsa, Mukhtaṣar al-Maʿānī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ.*

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22 Authored by Muḥammad Saʿīd Sunbul Majallā'ī Shāfiʿī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He lived in Makka and used to teach in Masjid al-Ḥarām. He passed away in Ṭā'if in 1175/1762 (*Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Ma'āthir*).

23 Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Mau in 1315/1897 and his father's name is Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf spent most of his life with Muḥaddith Kabīr and like him he was educated in Mau and Deoband. He graduated from Darul Uloom Mau in 1341/1923. His teachers include Shaykh Karīm Bakhsh, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Amrōhī and ʿAllāma Ibrāhīm Balyāwī (may Allāh have mercy on them). He also taught at Darul Uloom Mau and Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau where he was the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and Principal. He was the debater of his era and an expert in most fields. He remained a member of the Indian Assembly from 1377–81 (1958–62). He passed away in Dhū ʾl-Ḥijja 1392 (January 1973) (see *Tadhkira Mawlānā Nuʿmānī by* Muftī Ẓafīr al-Dīn and *Hadiyya al-darārī*).

7. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd Ḥusaynī Mauī[24] (may Allāh have mercy on him) with whom he studied most of *Sunan al-Tirmidhī.* That year he went for *Ḥajj,* so Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf taught in his place for a while.
8. Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Azmi.[25]
9. Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi.
10. Qārī ʿAbd al-Mannān.
11. Shaykh Shafīʿ Aḥmad.
12. Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān (Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's father).
13. Muftī Akhtar Ḥasan.

Ḥajj and ʿUmra

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth first visited the Two Holy Sanctuaries (Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn) in 1407/1987 and thereafter travelled there on numerous occasions for *ḥajj* and *ʿumra.*

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24 Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd (may Allāh have mercy on him) was educated at Darul Uloom Mau. He was a student of Muḥaddith Kabīr and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf (may Allāh have mercy on them) and was a teacher at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm Mau. He was an accepted individual among the masses with many qualities and exemplary character. He passed away on Dhū ʾl-Qaʿda 26, 1402/September 14, 1982. He had taken the pledge (*bayʿa*) with Shaykh al-Islām Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī (may Allāh have mercy on him) due to which he would call himself a 'Ḥusaynī' (see *Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir* and *Hadiyya al-aḥwadhī*).

25 Shaykh Shams al-Dīn (may Allāh have mercy on him) graduated from Darul Uloom Mau in 1341/1923. He was a class-fellow of Muḥaddith Kabīr in some subjects. After graduating he rendered great services to Madrasa Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm. He was a chronic asthmatic and passed away in Jumādā Ūlā 1392/June 1972 (*Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir*).

Chapter 2

TEACHING & OTHER SERVICES

Teaching

AFTER SPECIALISING IN ḤADĪTH Shaykh al-Ḥadīth taught for a while at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau. Then, on the advice of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) he went to Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm, Varanasi (Banārās)[26] where he taught for approximately four years. At first he taught *Kāfiya Ibn al-Ḥājib, Sharḥ al-Jāmī* and *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī.* Not only was he very talented but he also enjoyed a good relationship with Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) and was his special student, sent personally by him with his *duʿāʾs* to this *madrasa.* The students were enthused by his style of teaching and were so thrilled that on the very first day they went to the principal and sung his praises. The principal was naturally delighted and appointed him to also teach *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* the following year. He also had the opportunity to deliver a lesson on *Sunan al-Nasāʾī.* Now his acceptance became apparent to the students.

The following year he was given *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* to teach and was also made responsible for issuing *fatwās.* He would write the *fatwā* and the head muftī, Muftī ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Makkī (may Allāh have mercy on him) would approve it and sign on it. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth worked in the *fatwā* department for a few years. Since his family were still in Mau he

26 Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm: This is a famous seat of learning in Varanasi (Banārās). Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār (may Allāh have mercy on him) taught there. It was during his time that Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) studied under him and he [Muḥaddith Kabīr] later went on to teach there in two separate stints.

lived there alone for four years and would travel to Mau to visit them sometimes during the weekly holidays.

Varanasi and Mawdūdism

Besides his lecturing commitments Shaykh al-Ḥadīth built a strong rapport with the general public through his effort in the field of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh.* He once mentioned that whilst living in Varanasi he was given some books on Mawdūdism by friends. He read them thoroughly but eventually became weary with their philosophy and did not devote further time to the subject.

In this regard Shaykh al-Ḥadīth remarks:

> The full name of the *madrasa* in Varanasi is Jāmiʿa Yatīm Khāna Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm. When I first arrived there, there was a strong inclination towards Mawdūdism. A number of teachers were on the board or trustees of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Varanasi. The students' library was full of Jamaat-e-Islami books and they were influenced by them. There would often be Jamaat-e-Islami talks in the city. I was most unfamiliar with this group as there was no trace of them in our area. In Mau, only the ghayr muqallidīn are famous for their objections to the Ḥanafīs and Deobandīs and they have a few *madrasas* and numerous mosques there. The Raḍākhānīs and Barēlwīs are almost non-existent; I am only aware of one small *madrasa* and one mosque that are near to our old house. They are only few in number and of little influence, with no one agreeing to their beliefs. There is also one family of Shiʿas with a mosque of their own. They too have no influence. As for the Mawdūdīs, I was not familiar with them at all, as I did not know of any in Mau.
>
> When I arrived at the *madrasa* I began mingling with people from the Jamaat-e-Islami and they gave me some of Mawdudi Ṣāḥib's literature, especially that relating to *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* and *jihād.* I read them and liked them. Then I began wondering why our scholars disagreed with the Jamaat-e-Islami philosophy. Therefore, I began to investigate the books our scholars had written refuting Mawdūdism and I came across a number of articles in the magazine *al-Furqān.* These books included:

(1) *Qalandar har che gawīd dīda gawīd* (Whatever the men of Allāh see, they see with insight), an article by Shaykh ʿAtīq al-Raḥmān Sanbhalī (may Allāh have mercy on him) the son of Shaykh Muḥammad Manẓūr Nuʿmānī; (2) *Mawdudi Ṣāḥib kī ḥikmat-e ʿilmī par tabṣira* (A review of Mawdudi Ṣāḥib's rationale) by Mawlānā Madanī (may Allāh have mercy on him); (3) *Mawdudi Ṣāḥib kī Khilāfat wa mulūkiyyat kā jawāb* (An answer to Mawdudi Ṣāḥib's *Khilāfat wa mulūkiyyat*) by Mawlānā Muḥammad Miyā, the then head of Jamʿiyyat al-ʿUlamāʾ, India; (4) *Ḥaḍrat Uthmān* ﷺ *kē shawāhid-e taqaddus* (Evidence for the holiness of ʿUthmān); (5) *Tajdīd sabāʾiyyat* (Sabaʾiyya reform) by Shaykh Isḥāq Sandelwī, a teacher at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ; (6) *Ḥaḍrat Muʿāwiya* ﷺ *awr Tārīkhī Ḥaqāʾiq* (Ḥaḍrat Muʿāwiya ﷺ and historical facts) by Muftī Taqi Usmani (7) *Taʿbīr kī ghalaṭī* (A mistaken interpretation) by Mawlānā Wahiduddin Khan, a lively critique and refutation of Mawdudi Ṣāḥib; and (8) *Fitna-e Mawdūdiyyat* (The corruption of Mawdūdism) by Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī (may Allāh have mercy on him).

Thereafter, when I used to sit with them I would engage in rigorous debate, refuting Mawdudi Ṣāḥib's philosophy and ideas.

Coincidently, the principal of the *madrasa,* Shaykh Isḥāq Banārasī (may Allāh have mercy on him) shared our viewpoint and was a great admirer of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). He would show great compassion toward me as I had been sent by Muḥaddith Kabīr personally. I had a relationship with the work of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* from before and I would visit the Tablīghī Markaz in Varanasi. I had also built up a relationship with the brothers involved in the work. I also attended some Jamaat-e-Islami programs, but noticed a major deficiency in spirituality in their work. Despite the fact that they were well organized and their talks were good, 'These were words spoken by the tongue, not the heart,' therefore it had no effect on the heart, and only benefitted the ears. On the contrary the *tablīghī* talks had a profound effect on the heart as they were concerned with self-rectification and rectification of the Umma. They evoked remembrance of the grave and the Hereafter and this was a clear distinction that immediately became apparent.

After that, with the advice of the Tablīghī Markaz I began leading groups of students in [*tablīgh*] *jamāʿat.* Most of the time we would leave on a Friday to one of the mosques in town where other *tablīghī* brothers would join us. *Gasht* and talks would take place as well as *tashkīl.*[27] We would not have the opportunity to stay overnight and would return to the *madrasa* by the evening. Through this, the minds of many of the students began to slowly change. This pattern continued and soon some capable brothers had established themselves in the effort [of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh*]. A senior teacher at the *madrasa,* who was also a senior member of the Jamaat-e-Islami was dismissed. He filed a legal case as a result, due to which the *madrasa* was closed for three weeks. Later, he distanced himself from the Jamaat-e-Islami and expressed regret for his past involvement. He was reemployed by the *madrasa* but not very long after that he passed away. May Allāh have mercy upon him. *Āmīn.*

Other teachers who were members of the Jamaat-e-Islami left for their own reasons. I also left for Dabhel, Gujarat. Then, my respected teacher, Shaykh ʿAbd-al Jabbār Mauī Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) accepted a teaching post there [Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm] and became the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. Shaykh Niʿmat Allāh Azmi (may Allāh protect him) who is currently a senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband, also initially taught at this *madrasa* [Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm]. The Jamaat-e Islami philosophy was finally dispelled once and for all.

Whilst residing in Varanasi, I wrote some articles refuting Mawdūdism which were published in Deoband's monthly *Tajallī* magazine. I was also the sole *imām* of the mosque in the *madrasa.* Due to my talks in the nearby locality and surrounding areas and because of the *tablīghi jamāʿat* work and gatherings (*jalsas*) in the local mosques, the locals were familiar with me and we had a good relationship. Madrasa Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm is located in the northern area of the region, near the railway station. The southern region of the city, Madanpūra is well known because of its Muslim inhabitants.

27 *Gasht* refers to meeting fellow Muslims. *Tashkīl* is encouraging others to join the cause (translator).

There is also a Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya there, and our good friend, Shaykh Abū ʾl-Qāsim Banārasī (may Allāh protect him) lives there. I sometimes have the opportunity to visit the area. Shaykh Ḥusayn Banārasī (may Allāh have mercy on him) also lived there and we were good friends.

Varanasi is famous for its large Hindu population though there is still a significant Muslim community, especially on the outskirts of the city. There are many mosques with people from the Ḥanafī, Ghayr Muqallid and Barēlwī schools of thought. Debates are common, with many talks and gatherings held for this sole purpose. Staying in such an environment means that one is exposed to many different ideologies, due to which one gets the opportunity to study and research. My research of the Jamaat-e-Islami movement was for this very reason—the environment forced me to undertake it.

There are also Shīʿa in Varanasi and some Barēlwīs are inclined towards Shiism, so articles and books on this topic surface from time to time. During that time, I also had the opportunity to study many books refuting Shiism, and countless books on the incident of Karbala. These included: *Tuḥfa-e Karbala* by Shaykh Sirāj al-Ḥaq Machlīshahrī; *al-ʿAwāṣim min al-qawāṣim* by *Ibn al-ʿArabī*; *Khilāfat-e Muʿāwiya* ﷺ *wa Yazīd* and *Taḥqīq-e mazīd,* both by Maḥmūd Aḥmad ʿAbbāsī; and *Raʾs al-Ḥusayn* ﷺ by Ibn Taymiya (may Allāh have mercy on him). Others included books by Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyib and Mawlānā Abū ʾl-Kalām Āzād. I eventually reached the conclusion that I should not devote any more time to this. 'That was a nation that had passed away. They shall reap the fruits of what they did, and you of what you do. And you will not be asked of what they used to do' (Qurʾān 2:141).

Dabhel

On the advice of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him), Shaykh al-Ḥadīth moved to Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya Dabhel[28] in Dhū ʾl-Ḥijja

28 Surat is a famous city in India. There are two villages located off the main road leading from it to Mumbai, namely Dabhel and Simlak. Dabhel is located 26 km from Surat and 14 km from Navsari. Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya was originally established as a *maktab*

1394 (January 1975), where he remained for approximately twelve years. For the first three years he lived alone in one of the rooms of the *madrasa*. Later, his entire family arrived and he moved into a residence outside the *madrasa,* near the Jāmiʿ Mosque. He worked determinedly in the public domain and the locals continue to remember him fondly to this day. Whether he was delivering speeches, offering advice, helping and assisting in community affairs, writing *taʿwīdh* or performing *dam*;[29] in all respects he worked tirelessly and was accepted by one and all.

Teaching the Sabʿa and ʿAshara Qirāʾas

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also taught the seven *qirāʾas* (*sabʿa*) and the ten *qirāʾas* (*ʿashara*) in his spare time. The circumstance behind this is noteworthy. The head *qārī* of Jāmiʿa Dabhel, Qārī Aḥmad Allāh Bhāgalpūrī (may Allāh protect him) went to Deoband in 1403 AH and so the students of the Jāmiʿa expressed their desire to study the *Shāṭbiyya* and the seven *qirāʾas* under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. The *madrasa* had already approved the idea and the books were also available so Shaykh al-Ḥadīth taught the *Shāṭbiyya* that year and dictated *Muqaddima ʿilm-e qirāʾāt* (Introduction to the science of Qurʾānic recitation) and *Tadhkira qurrāʾ-e ʿashara awr inkē ruwāt* (Biographies of the ten major *imāms* (of *qirāʾa*) and their narrators). The following year, though Qārī Aḥmad Allāh (may Allāh protect him) returned, the overwhelming majority of students wanted to continue their practice (*ijrāʾ*) of the seven *qirāʾas* with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. Hence, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was appointed this task and he taught wholeheartedly, devoting a great deal of time and energy to it.

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in the mosque of Simlak, but over time as the need to increase capacity grew, land was purchased in the village of Dabhel and the seminary was transferred there. Shaykh Aḥmad Ḥasan Bhām Simlakī (may Allāh have mercy on him) laid the foundations in 1326/1908. Numerous luminaries have taught and worked at this prestigious establishment including ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and ʿAllāma Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUthmānī (may Allāh have mercy on them) (see *Tarīkh-e Jāmiʿa* by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)).

29 *Taʿwīdh* are amulets that contain Qurʾānic verses etc., and *dam* refers to blowing over a person or into water after reciting some Qurʾānic verses or supplications (translator).

It was said that once in a single night he conducted the practice (*ijrāʾ*) of nine to ten portions (*ajzāʾ*) of the Qurʾān. In 1405 AH he taught the *Durra, ʿAqīla* and *Ṭayyiba* texts in *qirāʾa* and in 1406 AH he supervised the recitation of the additional three completing *qirāʾas* (*thalātha mutammima*). Successful students were granted authorisation (*isnād*) from the seminary as well as a personal authorisation from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. To this day students in India and England (Dewsbury Markaz) still study the seven and ten *qirāʾas* through his chain of transmission.

Responsibility of the Assembly (Anjuman)

In order for facilitate the practice of public speaking for students, Jāmiʿa Dabhel organised weekly assemblies. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was appointed as the supervisor, a duty which he performed admirably throughout. Students would hold an annual conference (*jalsa*) on a relevant theme and the task of overseeing and organising this was also given to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

Once a Qurʾānic recitation competition was held and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth together with Qārī Anīs Fayḍābādī (may Allāh have mercy on him), the former head *qārī* at Madrasa Falāḥ al-Dārayn, Tarkeshwar were appointed as judges. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would also be called on a regular basis to examine students at Jāmiʿa Dabhel and other *madrasas* too. All praise is due to Allāh that in the field of *tajwīd* and *qirāʾa* Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has rendered great service.

Compiling Tārīkh-e Jāmiʿa (A History of Jāmiʿa Dabhel)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth compiled a history of Jāmiʿa Dabhel. When the board [of Jāmiʿa Dabhel] decided such a task should be undertaken their choice fell on Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and this task was assigned to him. Despite his other academic commitments, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth put a great deal of time and effort into this challenging task. His meticulous research included sifting through *madrasa* reports and historical records and this was coupled with the collection and collation of oral accounts

of relevant elderly individuals in the community. After gathering a plethora of information, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth prepared a concise history of the institute. The various chapters, once prepared, would be sent for approval to the principal, Shaykh Saʿīd Aḥmad Buzrūg (may Allāh have mercy on him). The book was first published in Deoband in 1406 AH and was republished some time later in Pakistan.

Azaadville

Whilst at Dabhel, students from all corners of the world derived great benefit from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. His unique style of teaching was so inspiring that perhaps no student could fail to be amazed or be left profoundly moved by his lessons (further details will be discussed later, if Allāh wills). Nevertheless, the acceptance that Allāh had bestowed him with in the hearts of the people was manifest in the numerous invitations he received from England and South Africa. After much deliberation he accepted the invitation of the people of South Africa and in Shawwāl 1406 (June 1986) he left for South Africa. This was a very sad occasion for the people of Dabhel. After arriving in South Africa, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth lived alone for two years. At that time, the final year of the course (*dawrat al-ḥadīth*) had not yet been started so Shaykh al-Ḥadīth taught the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, Hidāya, Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥāba, Uṣūl al-Shāshī* and other books. After two years his entire family joined him and in the very same year (1408 AH) classes for the final year were initiated. He has since then been teaching the whole of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* for many years.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also has the responsibility of teaching a number of other books which vary from time to time. These include *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī, Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid* and Ṭaḥāwī's *Sharḥ al-Maʿānī.* Initially, due to the large number of books Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had been assigned, the sacrifice he had to make was huge and he worked very hard to teach them all as they deserved to be taught. This cannot be more obvious than from the responsibility he assumed during the first year of *dawrat al-ḥadīth.* In that year Shaykh al-Ḥadīth taught *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,*

Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hidāya, Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid and *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*. Later, he was assigned Ibn Nujaym's *al-Ashbāh wa ʾl-naẓāʾir*, Shāṭbī's *ʿAqīla atrāb al-qaṣāʾid,* Ibn Ḥajar's *Bulūgh al-marām,* Shīrāzī's *al-Lumaʿ* (in Shāfiʿī jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*)), Imām Lukhnawī's *al-Rafʿ wa ʾl-takmīl, Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ,* and Ẓafar Aḥmad ʿUthmānī's *Qawāʾid fī ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*. He also taught *Risālat al-awāʾil* and the *Musalsalāt* every year. Sometimes, whilst travelling, the local scholars would come and read *Risālat al-awāʾil* and obtain his authorisation.

Unique Features of His Teaching

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's lessons are always well researched and interesting. His talent is such that no matter the subject or book with which he is entrusted, he is able to teach it. His lessons on *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* in particular[30] have led the likes of Muftī Rashīd Aḥmad Farīdī to say: 'We as students used to refer to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as "Shaykh al-kull fī ʾl-kull" ("the shaykh of all in all").' He goes on to say, 'Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's style of teaching was so unique that when he would teach the *Shāṭbiyya,* for example, he would teach in such a way that we would inadvertently end up memorizing many of the poems in it. During one particular lesson of *Shāṭbiyya*, he highlighted in a single poem the application of laws from several different disciplines including Arabic grammar (*naḥw*), morphology (*ṣarf*) and rhetoric (*balāgha*).'

Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī writes: 'I have been and continue to be astounded of his depth of knowledge and unquestionable God-gifted talent and expertise in every field' (*Muqaddima sharḥ Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ*). When Shaykh Fārūq Makkī (may Allāh protect him) visited South Africa in 1422/2001 he took time out of his busy schedule to attend Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's lesson, after which he commented:

> Such a well-researched and fascinating lecture is of the type that Shaykh Binnōrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) used to deliver. To find a lesson of

30 Those who have studied this text by him will testify to his mastery of it and often comment that the rights of such a book can only be fulfilled by him.

> such quality nowadays is most rare. His mere presence is a great bounty for the people of South Africa. If he was not here then perhaps the religious environment would not be as it is. May Allāh grant the people of South Africa an appreciation for him. *Āmīn.*

He then encouraged his assistants to see to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's needs and emphasised the need to spread his knowledge. Many other scholars have highlighted their admiration for him, but the aforementioned comment suffices.

When teaching, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's practise has always been to leave unnecessary discussions aside and deal with the important issues in detail. He always decodes the text regardless of the book. In any given lesson he does not restrict himself to the appointed text and if any important topic arises or he wishes to present additional research he cites references or sometimes reads directly from other sources. In the issue of raising of the hands in prayer (*rafᶜ al-yadayn*), for example, he reads references from an extended number of books.

His teaching practise (especially in regard to the major books) includes recording dates [often in the margin] to ascertain the pace he needs to maintain [by comparing it to previous years] in order to complete the amount required by the curriculum comfortably. In this way, lessons at the end of the year are delivered in the same manner as those at the beginning, without compromising quality or content. If any lesson is missed due to travels or otherwise he devotes his spare time to the students in order to catch up. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is very particular with time and is always punctual. It is exceptionally rare that he arrives late or leaves later than scheduled. Even his teaching outside of normal hours is governed by a strict schedule; for example, from Muḥarram he has two weekly lessons in the evening. From Jumādā Thāniya he teaches for one hour (usually after ᶜIshāʾ) except on Thursdays and Fridays.

Besides teaching, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also displays concern for the spiritual wellbeing and nurturing of the students. He places great emphasis on prayer, Fajr in particular. He always asks his students

whether or not they have performed Fajr with congregation and if they missed any *rakʿas* (units of prayer). He sometimes says to his students, 'Whoever finds it difficult to wake up for Fajr should sleep in the mosque as his eyes will open when people arrive for prayer.' In short, his talks often revolve around the importance of *daʿwa* and *ṣalāt*. He also speaks on the importance of education and the responsibilities of the scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*), quoting passages and extracts from various books. These include *Tuḥfat al-mutaʿallimīn, Faḍāʾil al-ṣadaqāt* and *Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿilm wa faḍluhu,* from which he discusses important and beneficial points. At the beginning of the year when he dictates important notes to the students, he also includes the following poem of Ibn Durayd:[31]

أَهْلاً وَسَهْلاً بِالَّذِيْنَ أُحِبُّهُمْ   وَأَوَدُّهُمْ فِي اللهِ ذِى ٱلْآلَآءِ

أَهْلاً بِقَوْمٍ صَالِحِيْنَ ذَوِىْ تُقًى   غُرِّ الْوُجُوْهِ وَزَيْنِ كُلِّ مَلَاءِ

يَا طَالِبِىْ عِلْمِ النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ   مَا أَنْتُمُ وَسِوَاكُمُ بِسَوَاءِ

Welcome to those whom I love
 And hold dear for the sake of Allāh, the Bountiful One
Welcome to a righteous and pious people
 Shining faces and the beauty of every gathering
O seekers of knowledge of the Prophet Muḥammad
 Others cannot be equalled with you

Other Religious Services

In most of the fields of the religion Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has had, and continues to have an important role to play. In particular, his contributions in the field of ḥadīth and his efforts in the work of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh*

31 These advices, together with oft-quoted poems have been compiled into book-form, entitled *Ganjīna ashʿār-e maʿrifat*.

are plain for all to see. On Fridays (his day off), he often travels with students in [*tablīgh*] *jamāʿat* in the path of Allāh. Sometimes, whilst travelling in *jamāʿat,* he teaches *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and sets time aside for the teaching of other books such as Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā's (may Allāh have mercy on him) *Tablīghī jamāʿat par iʿtirāḍāt kē jawābāt* [which answers objections raised against the *tablīghī jamāʿat* effort] and the sayings of the Physician of the Umma Thānawī and ʿAllāma Binnōrī (may Allāh have mercy on them).

For the effort of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* Allāh has taken Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to many parts of the world. Examples include, the two Holy Sanctuaries (*Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn*), either for *ḥajj* or *ʿumra* during which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would be punctual with discourses, meeting fellow Muslims and performing *gasht*. During the *ḥajj* of 1422/2002, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth together with Ḥāfiẓ Patel of England and others would go the various camps, often delivering speeches twice or thrice a day. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would also be particular about performing *gasht* in Minā too.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has also visited Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Jordan, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Pakistan, Palestine, Reunion, Syria, Turkey, UK, USA, West Indies (Barbados, Trinidad and Grenada), Zambia and Zimbabwe. In all these countries numerous talks were held. Together with all these trips abroad, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has continued to strive on the domestic front, often travelling to the various regions of South Africa. There have also been numerous invitations from other places but due to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's various commitments he has been unable to oblige. An example of his itinerary for one three-day trip to the Natal Province, South Africa in April 2001 is presented below:

Thursday:

- Return from *madrasa* at 4pm
- Perform ʿAsr and immediately leaves for the airport
- Reach Durban in time for ʿIshāʾ
- Talk after ʿIshāʾ at Junction Tablīghī Markaz in Durban.

Friday:

- Talk after Fajr at Masjid al-Nūr, Stanger
- Talk before Friday prayers at Jāmiᶜ Masjid, Stanger
- Talk for women (3–4pm)
- Talk after Maghrib, Tongaat
- Talk after ᶜIshāʾ, Verulam.

Saturday:

- Talk after Fajr at Spencer Road Mosque, Durban
- Talk from 11am to Ẓuhr at Madrasah In'aamiyyah, Camperdown
- Talk for women (2.30–3.30pm), Overport
- Talk after Maghrib at Greyland Road Mosque and meeting with some scholars (*ᶜulamāʾ*)
- Talk after ᶜIshāʾ at Jāmiᶜ Mosque, Effingham in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth sang some poems
- After dinner there was another private gathering in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also said some poetry.

Sunday:

- Talk after Fajr at Mallinson Road Mosque
- Consultations (*mashwara*) at 10am at Junction Road Tablīghī Markaz accompanied with a short talk
- Short talk at the *madrasa* of Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Khān
- Talk after Ẓuhr in Pietermaritzburg
- Talk for women (2.30–3.30pm), Pietermaritzburg
- Talk after ᶜAsr in a prayer room (*jamāᶜat khāna*)
- Talk after ᶜIshāʾ in Isipingo Hill Mosque after which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth returned to Johannesburg by air
- Arrive home about 11pm and the next morning back to his teaching routine.

This is the summary of one trip in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth delivered almost twenty talks. Similarly, in one trip to India in 2007 which lasted

almost two weeks, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth gave more than sixty talks. Such busy schedules are the norm for him. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is also currently patron of numerous *madrasas* and institutes in India, UK and Africa.

One of the gifts Allāh has bestowed upon Shaykh al-Ḥadīth includes his ability to draw from his wide-ranging knowledge at a moment's notice. Examples of this have been included below:

In his book *ʿIlm al-qirāʾāt awr qurrāʾ-e sabʿa* Qārī Abū ʾl-Ḥasan Azmi (may Allāh protect him) states that Imām Ibn Kathīr's students (may Allāh have mercy on him) include Imām Shāfiʿī (may Allāh have mercy on him). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has footnoted this as: 'This is incorrect as Imām Shāfiʿī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in 150 AH and Imām Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) passed away in 120 AH. This mistake is also found in *Jāmiʿ al-qirāʾāt*.'

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth delved into the issue of the importance of repose (*iṭmiʾnān*) and proper composure in the standing posture after *rukūʿ* (*qawma*) and in the sitting posture between the two *sajdas* (*jalsa*) in *ṣalāt,* and also highlighted some *duʿāʾs* to help achieve the repose and proper composure in them. Many scholars raised objections to this and suggested that the *duʿāʾ* was for voluntary (*nafl*) prayers only. However, after the issue was raised before other highly regarded scholars it soon became apparent that those scholars agreed with him. The authority and thoroughness of his research can be gauged from this.

A teacher from Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, wrote a critique of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* in which he listed the flaws of the book, concluding that it was inappropriate and that *Durūs al-balāgha* should be taught instead. The author also had reviews written by some senior scholars and after publication sent a copy to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to ascertain his opinion. After deep consideration Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was unable to agree with the teacher's research and made his point clear in a letter, a few extracts of which are mentioned here.

> All praise is due to Allāh, I am well. Your letter with the accompanying booklet was received. I read your critique of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* as well

> as the comments of the distinguished scholars and I also gave it to others to read. I am pleased that you have prepared this critical edition (*taṣḥīḥ*) and the marginalia (*taʿlīq*) of *Durūs al-balāgha,* together with the Urdu commentary. May Allāh bring the work to fruition, and may the scholars and students of prophetic knowledge benefit from it. May it be a means of continuous charity for you.
>
> Unfortunately, I cannot agree with your critique of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* and despite much thought and a second reading, I am unable to align myself to your position. As for those scholars who reviewed your book, they have done so on the basis of your work and not directly through personal experience. Therefore, they are not fully exposed to the pros and cons of the *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* itself.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth went on to answer every objection in detail and finally concluded:

> It seems as though you have gone to great lengths to discourage people [from *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ*] and have managed to influence those who have never studied the book, let alone teach it. Allāh is most aware of what is in the hearts of His servants and their intentions. My purpose of writing this is to defend the older teachers of the Jāmiʿa and other seminaries. I do not claim that this book [*Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ*] is the best or most beneficial or that it is completely free from flaws. However, it is undoubtedly a useful book with challenging exercises that require effort to solve—and effort reaps benefit. If one were to choose on the basis of ease alone then *Durūs al-balāgha* may be more appropriate. I do not deny this fact; However, I do reserve my judgement regarding your suggestion that it would be more beneficial [in every way than *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ*]. And Allāh knows best. Your conclusions appear somewhat harsh and seem to suggest that the older teachers were in some way ignorant. Although I am very far from you but since you wrote to me I have made my opinion clear. This I have done while keeping with the maxim, "the one who is consulted has been placed in a position of trust" (*al-mustashār muʾtaman*) in front of me. If

you agree with me, it would not be of any [personal] benefit to me, and if you disagree, then it will not cause me any harm. And peace be with you.'

In the village of Dabhel a scholar's (*ʿālim*) mother passed away. The scholar invited his teachers for a meal and extended his invitation to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth too. Coincidently, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was away at the time so he was unable to attend or meet with him in person. The scholar then invited Shaykh al-Ḥadīth on the second and third day but Shaykh al-Ḥadīth did not oblige, whereas other scholars did. On the third day the scholar brought some food to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's house. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth invited him inside and sat him down. He then opened various books and pointed out to him the ruling stating that feeding people at the home of the deceased is not [from] the Sharīʿa. He then explained that it was for this reason that he had not accepted the invitation.

One day when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was teaching the *Hidāya* at Jāmiʿa Dabhel a mischievous student decided to test him. The student came to class after copying out a long objection from one of the commentaries and posed the question in class. He began to read from his papers and got stuck in the middle. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth immediately realised that something was amiss and said: 'Come on! What's wrong? Has your objection come to an end?' When the student did not reply, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth himself completed the objection and explained the answer in detail. The student was shocked and those present were amazed at Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's breadth of knowledge.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is of the opinion that invitation for food from the bride's side of the family is not a *sunna*.[32] Therefore, when his daughters' *nikāḥs* (marriage ceremonies) took place he did not invite anybody nor did he pay much attention to informing everyone. For one of his daughters, his father Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān (may Allāh protect him) performed the *nikāḥ* after Maghrib in the Azaadville

32 This was also the opinion of Muḥaddith Kabīr, Muftī Kifāyat Allāh (may Allāh have mercy on them) and many others as according to them there is no evidence for this custom from Ḥadīth or *fiqh* (see *Kifāyat al-muftī* 5:156 and *al-Maʾāthir* Rajab 1416).

Mosque. After prayer, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth turned to the audience and said: 'See, my nose is where it was [i.e., I have not been put to shame] even though I did not invite anyone for a wedding reception.' He then informed everyone, 'I am off to *shab guzārī*[33] now' and proceeded from there. Allāh has protected Shaykh al-Ḥadīth from such mundane and irreligious customs and rituals. On that very day, his father (may Allāh protect him) had an invitation elsewhere and so he went too after the *nikāḥ* was over. Such simplicity was maintained in all his children's weddings.

In Dabhel's central mosque the *imām* once made a mistake in his recitation during the prayer. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth corrected him. After the prayer another scholar objected and asked him why he had corrected the *imām* as [in his opinion] there had not been any need to do so. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth suggested that the matter should be put to the *madrasa's* fatwā department to be resolved. After researching the matter, they found that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had been correct.

An individual from England mentioned that somebody in one of the mosques once mentioned a ḥadīth that others had not heard of before. Some of the listeners felt the desire to find a reference for this ḥadīth but were not able to get an answer after consulting many scholars. Coincidently, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was visiting a nearby mosque at the time and when the people asked, he was able to immediately inform them that it was in such and such a volume of *al-Targhīb wa ʾl-tarhīb.*

When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was staying in Dabhel he would be requested to lead the ʿĪd prayers. Even after moving to South Africa, if he happened to travel to Gujarat in the Ramaḍān holidays, he would be requested to perform the ʿĪd prayers and give a talk. A year before his entire family moved to South Africa, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's eldest daughter had an operation scheduled in a hospital in Surat and so he

33 This refers to spending a night at a *tablīghi markaz*, usually Friday night, which is the night that follows the day of Thursday. A talk about the importance of *daʿwa* and related subjects is delivered with the view to increase the concern of people for the Umma (translator).

stayed with her. Two or three days before ʿĪd al-Fiṭr members of the Dabhel community came to him and insisted he lead the ʿĪd prayer for them. Hence, on ʿĪd morning Shaykh al-Ḥadīth travelled in a rickshaw to Dabhel, and gave the talk and led the prayer.

During Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's stay in England one Ramaḍān, he went with some [*tablīghī*] brothers to meet some of the local Muslim after Maghrib. They went to meet a man who wasn't in a very good spiritual state and this visit was deemed very important. They therefore decided to go at a time when he would be least busy, so there would be more chance for him to pay attention to what they had to say. They arrived as he was closing his shop. As soon as he saw them he inquired as to which mosque they had come from. On reply he said: 'I have already donated ten pounds for it.' They replied that they had come for the sole purpose of speaking about the religion (*dīn*) with him and not to collect money for charity. They also introduced Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and mentioned that he was a great shaykh and a scholar of ḥadīth who has come from abroad. The person was a bit taken aback. He invited them in and sat them down with great respect. All praise is due to Allāh that after they had spoken to him in detail, he became very much impressed. He has since changed and now has great enthusiasm for Islam.

It was also in England that someone mentioned to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth that there were some [Muslim] youths who were confused about [their] religion. They always made objections, thereby confusing others too. The people suggested to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth that he should meet them. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth first suggested that the local scholars be taken to meet them, but they replied that none of the scholars were prepared to do so. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then agreed to meet with them.

In 1998, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth travelled to Maputo, Mozambique where he conducted many programs. He also gathered the local scholars and read from the works of the senior scholars, reminding them of the importance and benefits of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh*. He made particular reference to the Physician of the Umma Thānawī's counsels (may Allāh have mercy on him) from his book *Daʿwat wa tablīgh kē uṣūl wa aḥkām*

and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī's (may Allāh have mercy on him) book *Tablīghī jamāʿat par iʿtirāḍāt kē jawābāt*. The *imām* of the famous Bāb al-Salām Mosque there had some objections with regards to the Tablīgh Jamāʿat. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth answered his objections so well that the *imām* became convinced of the work and went to Pakistan (where he was originally from) and spent four months in *tablīgh*. Some have even reported that he spent a year in *tablīgh*.

Another scholar also had some objections about the permissibility of eating prawns. He discussed the issue with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth who satisfied him that they were permissible.

One of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's students narrates the following:

> In the fifth year of my studies I was honoured to be taught *Jalālayn* by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. It was his habit that during the lesson he would regularly ask us questions on Arabic grammar, morphology and other related sciences. If the other students were unable to answer he would ask me and, all praise is due to Allāh, I was able to answer most of the time. Once, we were studying the final verse of Sūra Ḥāmīm Sajda in which Allāh says: 'Nor is your Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants' (*Wa mā Rabbuka bi ẓallāmin li ʾl-ʿabīd*) [Qurʾān 41:46]. The commentary of the word *ẓallām* as suggested by the author of the book is *dhī ẓulmin*. As was his habit, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth asked why the author had said this. Since no one answered, he asked me, but I replied that I did not know either. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then said: 'Can't you remember the lesson in *ʿIlm al-ṣīga* regarding *fāʿil dhī kadhā?'* With great shame, I replied that I could not recall it. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth instructed me to check it and then let him know. All praise is due to Allāh that since then I have remembered this point well.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth established Darul Uloom Nuʿmāniyya in Chatsworth, Durban in 2001 with just 5 students. Under his leadership and guidance the Darul Uloom has flourished and now has almost 200 students, with full-time and part-time *ḥifẓ* courses (the latter for school-going

children). The traditional Islamic curriculum is also offered up to the *dawrat al-ḥadīth* with time allocated to Qurʾānic recitation (*qirāʾa*) and *daʿwa* and *tablīgh*.

Similarly, Madrasa Raḥmāniyya in Laudium runs under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's guidance along with Madrasah Da'watul Haq in Azaadville (founded in 2002) which currently has approximately 150 male and female students (combined) gaining religious and secular knowledge. Many of these students are orphans or some whose parents (or one of them) are not Muslim. The Madrasa takes responsibility for their accommodation, education, food and clothing. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also helps and sponsors many other institutes.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is often invited to inaugurate the study of major books of ḥadīth at *madrasas* around the world, and is frequently requested to deliver the final lecture of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Numerous students and scholars have sought and continue to seek authorization (*ijāza*) to transmit from Shaykh al- Ḥadīth; his lesson of *Risālat al-awāʾil* is famous in this regard.

Some Well-Known Students of the Shaykh

1. Muftī Ebrahim Desai, Durban, South Africa, Muftī of Natal and senior lecturer in ḥadīth
2. Shaykh Ibrahim Patel, Skeerpoort, South Africa
3. Shaykh Ahmad Buzrug, Principal of Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, India
4. Shaykh Ahmad Sulayman Katani, Durban, South Africa
5. Shaykh Ahmad Derwesh, Azaadville, South Africa
6. Shaykh Ahmad Sabir, Azaadville, South Africa
7. Shaykh Ismail Abdul-Khaliq, Malegaon, India
8. Shaykh Ismail Pandor, Simlak, India
9. Shaykh Ismail Padia, Durban, South Africa
10. Shaykh Ashraf Dockrat, Laudium, South Africa
11. Qārī Ismail Essack, Azaadville, South Africa

12. Shaykh Ismail Wali, Reunion
13. Shaykh Imtiyaz, Dewsbury, England
14. Shaykh Ayyub Mangera, Lenasia, South Africa
15. Shaykh Khalid, son of Shaykh Bayazid Pandor, Lenasia, South Africa
16. Shaykh Dawud Qasim, Roshnee, South Africa
17. Shaykh Rashīd Aḥmad Farīdī, Tarāj, Gujarat, India
18. Shaykh Riyad Hashim, Laudium, South Africa
19. Shaykh Said Patel, son of Ḥāfiẓ Patel, Dewsbury, England
20. Shaykh Sulayman Choksi, lecturer of ḥadīth, Darul Uloom Zakariyya, South Africa
21. Qārī Said Nurgat, Reunion
22. Muftī Shamsuddin Nur, Karachi, Pakistan
23. Muftī Abbas Bismillah, Muftī of Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, India
24. Muftī Abdul-Qayyum Kāthyāwārī, Assistant-Muftī, Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, India
25. Muftī Abdur-Rashid Memi, England
26. Shaykh Abdur-Rahman, son of Ḥāfiẓ Patel, Dewsbury, England
27. Shaykh Abdullah Derwesh, Roshni, Tarbiyat al-Banāt, Azaadville, South Africa
28. Muftī Abdus-Samad Desai, Pietermaritzburg , South Africa
29. Shaykh Abdullah (Ṣūfī Abdullah) Pandor, South Africa
30. Shaykh Abdur-Rahim Khan, Durban, South Africa
31. Shaykh Abdullah Hafejee, Durban, South Africa
32. Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī, Dewsbury, England
33. Shaykh Muhammad Ilyas Patel, Isipingo Beach, Durban, South Africa
34. Muftī Muhammad Saeed Motara, Muftī of Azaadville, South Africa
35. Shaykh Muhammad Sabir Ifrīqī, South Africa
36. Shaykh Muhammad Gardi, White River, South Africa
37. Muftī Muhammad Yaqub Minti, Klerksdorp, South Africa
38. Shaykh Musa Adamjee, Durban, South Africa
39. Shaykh Musa Memi, South Africa
40. Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf Bhula, California, USA
41. Shaykh Yusuf Darwan, lecturer of ḥadīth, Dewsbury, England

Senior Disciples (Khulafāʾ)

Bangladesh

1. Shaykh Aminud Dawla, Dhaka
2. Shaykh Shamsud Duha, Dhaka

Barbados

3. Muftī Ahmad Sa'id

Canada

4. Shaykh Abdullah Hatia
5. Muftī Zakariyya Phanchbhaya

India

6. Shaykh Imtiyaz, Islampura, Mau*[34]
7. Shaykh Islam, Chatanpura (Amīr of Tablīgh, Mau)
8. Shaykh Jamshed, Imām, Kanj (currently residing Nizamuddin Markaz, Delhi)
9. Muftī Jawed, Kyaritola, Mau*
10. Shaykh Sa'id Ahmad, Qasimpura, Mau*
11. Shaykh Zafar Ali, Bulaqipura, Mau*

Kenya

12. Shaykh Muhsin Abdul Qadir, Mombasa

Malawi

13. Shaykh Abdul Hay Khum
14. Shaykh Bilal Kharwadia, (currently Lusaka, Zambia)

34 * indicates *mujāz-e ṣuḥbat* only (discipleship but without permission to authorize other disciples).

Mozambique

15. Shaykh Abdullah Bay, Maputo
16. Muftī Abu Bakr Nur, Chimoio
17. Shaykh Faheem Farooq, Maputo
18. Muftī Imtiyaz Ibrahim, Maputo
19. Shaykh Muhammad Umar Ismail, Beira

Mauritius

20. Shaykh Ajmal Masudiyya
21. Muftī Muhammad Ridha
22. Shaykh Luqman Mangar

Réunion

23. Shaykh Bilal Gangat
24. Shaykh Habibullah Muhammad
25. Shaykh Wakil Ahmad Ghafur

South Africa

26. Shaykh Abdullah Patel, Mayfair, Johannesburg
27. Shaykh Abdur Rahim Khan, Durban
28. Shaykh Abdur Rahman Lambat, Palmridge (currently Johannesburg)
29. Shaykh Abdus Salam Kholwodia, Laudium
30. Shaykh Ashraf Dockrat, Laudium
31. Shaykh Ashraf Mulla, Durban
32. Shaykh Asif Ali, Durban
33. Shaykh Azhar Bulbulia, Rustenburg
34. Shaykh Hasan Rawat, Witbank
35. Shaykh Hashim Ghawri, Greytown
36. Muftī Husain Kadodia, Durban
37. Shaykh Idrees Sataria, Durban
38. Shaykh Ilyas Patel, Isipingo Beach (also has senior discipleship from Shāh Ḥakīm Akhtar)
39. Shaykh Irshad Musa, Pietermaritzburg

40. Shaykh Ismail Adamjee, Durban
41. Shaykh Ismail Jajoot, Durban
42. Shaykh Ismail Jeena, Brits (currently Madīna Munawwara)
43. Muftī Muhammad Bhana, Benoni
44. Shaykh Muhammad Chotia, Azadville
45. Shaykh Muhammad Faqeeh, Pietermaritzburg
46. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Hashim Sulaiman, Durban
47. Shaykh Muhammad Lambat, Heidelberg
48. Shaykh Muhammad Manjoo, Estcourt
49. Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id Banubhai, Rustenburg
50. Shaykh Musa Adamjee, Durban
51. Shaykh Nadeem Khan, Port Elizabeth
52. Bhai Qasim Bhorat, Azadville
53. Shaykh Riyadh Bhaila, Estcourt
54. Shaykh Shafiqur Rahman Azmi, Azaadville
55. Shaykh Shahin Vawda, Roshnee
56. Shaykh Sulaiman Bhamjee, Pietermaritzburg
57. Shaykh Sulaiman Karani, Benoni
58. Shaykh Obeid Salehjee, Estcourt
59. Bhāi Yunus Ismail, Laudium
60. Shaykh Yusuf Ragee, Rustenburg
61. Shaykh Zaheer Ishaq Bhana, Brits

Swaziland

62. Shaykh Abdur Rahman Essat

Trinidad

63. Muftī Muhammad Mahdi

United Kingdom

64. Shaykh Hamza Lorgot (currently Manchester)
65. Muftī Hashim Rawat Bhattay, Coventry
66. Shaykh Idrees Nawab

67. Shaykh Idrees Salloo, Derby
68. Shaykh Imtiyaz, Dewsbury
69. Shaykh Ismail Hafejee, Manchester
70. Shaykh Makeen Salloo, Walsall
71. Ḥājī Mushtaq Ahmad, Dewsbury
72. Shaykh Sajid Seth, London
73. Shaykh Sajid Sufi, Bolton
74. Dr Salim Pakistanī, Birmingham
75. Shaykh Shuaib Sadiq, Bolton
76. Shaykh Yasser Balesaria, London
77. Shaykh Yusuf Darwan, Dewsbury

United States of America

78. Shaykh Abdullah Nana, Mill Valley, California
79. Shaykh Abdur Rahman Mikaeel, New York
80. Shaykh Altaf Kapadia
81. Shaykh Nawaz Khan, Fremont

Zambia

82. Shaykh Imtiyaz Patel, Lusaka
83. Shaykh Shahid Khalid Muhammad Numani, Lusaka
84. Shaykh Zahid Khalid Muhammad Numani, Lusaka

Zimbabwe

85. Shaykh Irfan Patel, Harare

Chapter 3

SHAYKH AL-ḤADĪTH & HIS CONTEMPORARIES

ʿMuḥaddith Kabīr Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān ʿAzmi (may Allāh have mercy on him)

THE ACCEPTANCE THAT ALLĀH has granted Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in scholarly circles as well as in the public domain is not in need of elaboration. Suffice to say that his immediate family, the people most familiar with him, always speak highly of him. Furthermore, whenever Shaykh al-Ḥadīth visits India, invitations come flooding in to him. Some incidents and impressions of a few scholars have been listed below.[35]

Perhaps Shaykh al-Ḥadīth benefited most from Muḥaddith Kabīr and his works (may Allāh have mercy on him). His education was under his direct supervision as Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's father, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān had a very good relationship with him due to which, Muḥaddith Kabīr's attention would always be with him. Even after Shaykh al-Ḥadīth graduated, he would consult with his illustrious teacher before undertaking any important task, as has been mentioned before.

Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was teaching at Jāmiʿa Dabhel, the Faculty for Specialisation in Ḥadīth Studies (*takhaṣṣuṣ fī ʾl-ḥadīth*) was inaugurated and Muḥaddith Kabīr's name was nominated for its patronage. Due to their special relationship, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was

35 Some are no longer contemporaries of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as they have passed away but have still been included in the list as they once were (translator).

appointed for the delicate task of approaching him to undertake this role. Correspondence ensued between the two. The syllabus was decided but eventually due to insufficient number of students the faculty did not open.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth mentioned:

> Once I was sitting in Muḥaddith Kabīr's room. Despite the fact that it was a very modest and unfinished dwelling, it was in this very room that his great scholarly endeavours were undertaken. He said to me: 'One day Shaykh Sulaymān Nadwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was sitting with me in this room and I suggested to him that he go to the Physician of the Umma (Ḥakīm al-Umma) Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and learn from him, to which he replied: "He is very strict, perhaps I will not be able to endure it." I then said, "Why don't you go first and observe? What harm is there in taking a look?" So he went. On his return I met him and asked him about it. He said that he was not strict, rather a man of principle. When he requested to take the pledge (*bayʿa*) on his hands, the Physician of the Umma Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) first laid the condition that he should retract his opinion of a certain aspect of *miʿrāj* (nightly ascension) that was mentioned in his book *Sīrat al-Nabī* ﷺ. He should also openly announce this decision and repent. Shaykh Sulaymān Nadwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) complied[36] after which he took the pledge and also received discipleship (*khilāfa*)."'

Incident of Memorising the Qurʾān

At the time Shaykh al-Ḥadīth began teaching at Jāmiʿa Dabhel he had not yet memorized the Qurʾān. However, despite all his teaching responsibilities he would memorise a portion of the Qurʾān daily and would get his students to listen to him. Together with the ten or twelve

36 This announcement was published in the monthly *Maʿārif Azamgarh* magazine, but his book has not yet been updated

portions he had memorized previously, he soon completed the entire Qurʾān within a year.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth narrates the following incident:

> Once I had finished memorizing the Qurʾān in Dabhel I went to Mau. Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) told me to lead the *tarāwīḥ* prayer. I said my memory was weak and added that I made mistakes when reviewing my two daily portions. I mentioned to him that this task would be difficult unless there was someone present to correct any mistakes I made. Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) (who himself was not a *ḥāfiẓ,* despite being a great scholar and *muḥaddith*) said: 'What can I say, my memory was strong. If someone were to perform the *tarāwīḥ,* I would take a quick glance and I would be able to correct the *ḥāfiẓ* if the need arose. However, my memory has now weakened and I become dizzy and fall ill, making this task difficult.'

Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) had a great deal of affection for his student and when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would visit Mau he would request him to perform the ʿĪd prayer. Similarly, there are many such incidents through which one can gauge Muḥaddith Kabīr's high regard for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Nuʿmānī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also benefited from Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf greatly. He had an informal manner and whenever any difficulty arose, he would always manage to solve it. Once Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was reading Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī's *Nayl al-farqadayn,* when he came across a portion of text that he did not understand. He first approached a junior teacher and asked for an explanation, but he was unable to offer one. He then approached a more senior teacher and he too was unable to explain the

text. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then went to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Nuʿmānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) who, after just a brief glance, immediately explained it in a very confident manner.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth mentions:

> We used to study *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* under Shaykh Nuʿmānī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He never kept a book with him. We would bring one for him and indicate where the lesson was from and he would begin to explain the lesson in his informal style. I don't know if he came prepared or not. Shaykh Manẓur Nuʿmānī and Muftī Ẓafīr al-Dīn are two of his many students. He was a skilful and experienced debater and an energetic, brave man. His expertise extended to all fields and his talents were undeniable.

Shaykh ʿAyyūb ʿAzmi (may Allāh have mercy on him)

He was the former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel.[37] Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a good relationship with him because as a child, he would sometimes spend the night at Shaykh Ayyūb's house, which happened to be adjacent to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's maternal grandfather's house. When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would visit his mother's family with her in his childhood, he would stay with Shaykh Ayyūb because his maternal grandfather and grandmother had already passed away long before. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's respected mother was like a daughter to Shaykh Ayyūb's family. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth maintained a very good relationship with his teacher especially whilst at Dabhel. At the time when Shaykh

37 Shaykh Ayyūb Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Shawwāl 1319/January 1902 in Mau. He studied in Mau, Balyā and Deoband. His teachers include Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Mauī, ʿAllāma Ibrāhīm Balyāwī, Shaykh Iʿzāz ʿAlī, ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, ʿAllāma Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUthmānī and Muftī ʿAzīz al-Raḥmān (may Allāh have mercy on them). He also completed the *samāʿa* (listening) of *Tirmidhī* from Shaykh al-Hind (may Allāh have mercy on him). He passed away on Shawwāl 6, 1404/July 6, 1984. (*Tārīkh Jāmiʿa Dabhel*).

al-Ḥadīth was compiling the history of Jāmiᶜa Dabhel, Shaykh Ayyūb (may Allāh have mercy on him) also included a brief autobiography.

Numerous people have heard the Jurist of the Umma (Faqīh al-Umma) Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him) often saying that Shaykh Ayyūb (may Allāh have mercy on him) would address Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as *'Fazl.'* Once, when there was a meeting regarding who should be assigned certain books to teach at the Jāmiᶜa, Shaykh Ayyūb (may Allāh have mercy on him) commented, 'Give it to *Fazl,* give it to *Fazl.*'

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a good relationship with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā [Kāndhlawī][38] and had taken the pledge (*bayᶜa*) with him. Whenever he visited Saharanpur he benefited from the company of his Shaykh (may Allāh have mercy on him). After graduation, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth saved some money and travelled. He visited the Nizamuddin Markaz in Delhi and also travelled to Deoband, Saharanpur, Nānōta and Gangōh. It was during this journey that he took the pledge with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā (may Allāh have mercy on him). He received a booklet which contained introductory spiritual practices (*maᶜmūlāt*) and it was recommended that he also maintain a reformative relationship (*iṣlāḥī taᶜalluq*) with the Jurist of the Umma Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him). He then learnt the audible form of *dhikr* (*bi ᵓl-jahr*) from some of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā's senior disciples (*khulafāᵓ*). He once mentioned during a lesson that 'I saw Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā with my own eyes meditating (performing *murāqaba*) by

38 Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī's personality (may Allāh have mercy on him) needs no introduction. He passed away on Rajab 1402/May 1982 in Madīna Munawwara.

a grave.' Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also regularly studies Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā's works (may Allāh have mercy on him) including *Lāmiʿ al-dirārī, al-Abwāb wa ʾl-tarājim, al-Kawkab al-durrī, Badhl al-majhūd, Jamāʿat-e tablīgh par iʿtirāḍāt kē jawābāt* and *Āp bītī.*

The Jurist of the Umma Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

It was on the order of Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā (may Allāh have mercy on him) that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a reformative relationship (*iṣlāḥī taʿalluq*) with Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him). Whenever Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) would visit Dabhel or Azaadville, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would sit in his gatherings and benefit from him. He would also attend his gatherings of *dhikr.* Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) was once in Randfontein. Ḥājī Bhāi Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) was there too. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth arrived, greeted him with *salām* and inquired after his health. He then informed Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) that Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) was very ill. Muftī Maḥmūd made *duʿāʾ,* after which Ḥājī Bhāi Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) inquired from him whether he had seen Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) whilst a student or after graduation. Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) replied: 'After graduation, as I never had the opportunity whilst a student.'

In one gathering (where there was some discussion about Madrasa Falāḥ al-Dārayn, Tarkeshwar, India), Muftī Maḥmūd posed the question as to whether it was 'Tarkesar' or 'Tarkeshwar?' He then went on to explain that both pronunciations were correct. In another gathering a discussion was taking place on *al-Taṣwībāt li mā fī ḥāshiyat al-Bukhārī min al-taṣḥīfāt,* which was the work of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār Azmi Mauī (may Allāh have mercy on him) former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Mirqāt al-ʿUlūm, Mau. It was suggested that this particular work was

actually that of another individual, namely, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Madrasa Shāhī Murādābād and former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya Dabhel.[39] Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) clarified the issue by saying that it was not the work of the latter, but that of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār of Mirqāt al-ʿUlūm, who was his teacher. The reason for the confusion was obvious as both personalities shared the same name.

About a year or so before Muftī Maḥmūd passed away, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was travelling in India during which he visited the spiritual retreat (*khānqāh*) in Deoband. When he went to meet Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) and greeted him with *salām,* Muftī Maḥmūd stood up, and despite his weakness embraced him. He also enquired of his health and immediately made arrangements for food. Some of those present were greatly surprised at the level of honour and respect that Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) had displayed for his guest. They came to the conclusion that this must be a great scholar who had come to visit from abroad.

Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) instructed Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in a letter to initiate internal remembrance (*dhikr qalbī*) in such a manner that 'with every heartbeat the expression "Allāh, Allāh" should emerge.' In short, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a close relationship with Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) and feelings of love and affection were mutual. During his spiritual retreats (*khānqāh*), Shaykh al-Ḥadīth often reads from the poetry and writings of Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him), together with the works of Shāh Ḥakīm Akhtar (may Allāh protect him).

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39 Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār was born in Mau in 1325/1907. His teachers include Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Nuʿmānī Mauī, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Sahāranpūrī and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī (may Allāh have mercy on them) from whom he received discipleship (*khilāfa*). He twice held the role of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Dabhel. From 1379/1960 he was Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in Murādābād until his death on Shaʿbān 30, 1409/April 7, 1989 (*Tārīkh-e Shāhī* and *Tārīkh-e Dabhel*).

Shāh Muḥammad Waṣī Allāh Ilāhabādī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was a student at Jāmiᶜa Miftāḥ al-ᶜUlūm, Mau, Shaykh Muḥammad Waṣī Allāh (may Allāh have mercy on him) would occasionally visit.[40] Lessons would stop and all would gather in the Shāhī Katra Mosque of the Jāmiᶜa where he would give a talk. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth recalls: 'When I was a student in the fourth year, my respected father and I went to meet him personally and we requested his *duᶜāʾs*.' He went on to mention the unique atmosphere of his gatherings, 'Shāh Waṣī Allāh's gatherings were unique. Muḥaddith Kabīr would sit at his side and in front of him Qārī Riyāsat ᶜAlī and Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi, who were two of his most senior disciples (may Allāh have mercy on them). When he experienced a state of spiritual ecstasy (*jazb*) the gathering would be struck motionless with awe. Furthermore, I used to carefully read the magazine published from Shāh Waṣī Allāh's spiritual retreat (*khānqāh*), entitled *Maᶜrifat-e Ḥaq*. It contained amazing articles which were truly inspirational.'

The Knower of Allāh Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad Partābagharī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also attended the gatherings of another great friend of Allāh Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad Partābagharī[41] regarding whom he said,

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40 Shāh Waṣī Allāh was born in Fatehpur. He graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband and then took the pledge with Shaykh Ashraf ᶜAlī Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) and was also given discipleship (*khilāfa*). He later resided in Mumbai, and it was from there that he embarked on a journey to the Two Sacred Sanctuaries (*Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn*) but passed away en-route. His body was handed over to the sea (*Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir*).

41 Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad was born in 1323/1905 in Phulpur, in the Partābagharh district in UP. He was a disciple of Shāh Badr ᶜAlī of Rai Bereilly and also a disciple of

I once went to meet the shaykh. When I entered his room he was lying down. Out of respect I went to the foot-end of the bed and sat down on the floor. He immediately pulled his legs up out of respect. When I was leaving he gave me a brand new ten Rupee note. He would often be intoxicated in the remembrance of Allāh and would sometimes remain in this extraordinary state. I continue to study his books.

Once Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's Shaykh, Shāh Ḥakīm Akhtar (may Allāh protect him) spoke of him in a gathering saying, 'Those who have seen him (Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad Partābagharī) include Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him).' He then looked at Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and added, 'What type of a person was he? Merely looking at him reminds one of Allāh.'

Shaykh Muḥammad ᶜUmar Pālanpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a good relationship with Shaykh Muḥammad ᶜUmar Pālanpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him).[42] He would take interest in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's efforts and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would take interest in his. Shaykh Muḥammad ᶜUmar would show great respect for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and would make him sit in front of him when delivering a talk, saying to him, 'If I say anything which you object to, please inform me.'

Once Shaykh al-Ḥadīth heard him mention in a talk at Nizamuddin Markaz that a man in Heaven will have two million five hundred thousand heavenly maidens (*ḥūrs*). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth requested him for a

Shāh Faḍl al-Raḥmān Ganjmurādābādī (may Allāh have mercy on them). He passed away in Rabīᶜ Thānī 1412/October 1991 (*Ḥayāt Abū ʾl-Maʾāthir* and *al-Rashād,* Ṣafar 1421).

42 Shaykh Muḥammad ᶜUmar Pālanpūrī was born in Rabīᶜ Thānī 1348/September 1929 in Mumbai. He was educated at Maẓāhir al-ᶜUlūm and Deoband from where he graduated in 1375/1956. He passed away on Muḥarram 14, 1418/May 21, 1997 (*Sawāniḥ Mawlānā Muḥammad ᶜUmar*).

reference to this. Shaykh Muḥammad ʿUmar (may Allāh have mercy on him) cited *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥāba* and immediately instructed his sons to search for the relevant text, but they were unable to find it at the time. When they later discovered it, they forwarded the reference to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

On another occasion Shaykh Muḥammad ʿUmar Pālanpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) came to Azaadville and was delivering a talk. When he discovered Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was present in the gathering he immediately stood up, greeted him and made him sit close to him and commented, 'Upon hearing your name I don't know where my mind went!'

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd Ḥusaynī ʿMauī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was very close to Shaykh Ḥusaynī (may Allāh have mercy on him). This was primarily because Shaykh al-Ḥadīth studied *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* under him. His method of teaching this work involved a copy of *Tuḥfat al-aḥwadhī.* All the points he observed in his preparatory studies would be noted down in this copy and he would teach the lesson from it. Interestingly, when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth requested this very precious copy from his teacher, he gave it to him. Keeping in mind that many others had asked for this but had not been honoured, this act alone demonstrates the deep love he had for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. Despite all the effort and time spent in annotating the book, he was happy to gift it to his prized student. This precious copy still remains in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's safe hands. Furthermore, Shaykh Ḥusaynī (may Allāh have mercy on him) also wrote biographies of Imām Muslim and Imām Tirmidhī (may Allāh have mercy on them). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth copied these valuable works and they are also with him today.

Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd Nuʿmānī, Karachī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was most impressed with the writings of Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd Nuʿmānī. There was some correspondence between the two and a long-distance relationship ensued. When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth later visited Pakistan, the two met and engaged in lengthy discussions, after which Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd gifted some of his publications to him. When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth wrote *Muqaddima-e Bukhārī* and *Muqaddima-e Tirmidhī,* he sent them to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd to be edited. The shaykh read the works thoroughly, made corrections in a few places and added some footnotes and sent it back. This was all included in the published editions.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd was so impressed with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's works that he wrote to him, requesting him to embark upon the task of completing *Maʿārif al-Sunan* and *Amānī ʾl-aḥbār.* Further details of this request will be discussed later, Allāh willing. Unfortunately, due to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's numerous commitments he has been unable to fulfil this task to date. 'Perhaps Allāh will bring about thereafter a new situation' (Qurʾān 65:1).

Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Maʿrūfī (may Allāh protect him)

Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh protect him) is a teacher of ḥadīth and is responsible for the ḥadīth specialization course at Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm, Saharanpur, India. Whilst a student Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was examined on numerous occasions by Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, who had remarked several times: 'From all the students of Muḥaddith Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) that I have tested, I only ever anticipated Molwī Fazlur Rahman as his able deputy' (meaning, he would do justice to his knowledge through his services to it). Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh

protect him) mentioned this in front of his [Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn's] other students.

Shaykh Zuhayr ibn Nāṣir al-Nāṣir (may Allāh protect him)

Shaykh Zuhayr resides in Madīna Munawwara. He is a Ḥanafī and is inclined to *taṣawwuf.* Some of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's students went to Madīna Munawwara to further their studies in ḥadīth with him and other scholars there. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was introduced to Shaykh Zuhayr through his students and when he learnt that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was visiting Madīna Munawwara during *ḥajj,* he quickly made arrangements to meet him. Upon meeting, they were both delighted and talked for a while. Some of Shaykh Zuhayr's students read the *Risālat al-awāʾil* and received authorisation in ḥadīth from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. When this was done then Shaykh Zuhayr himself request authorisation. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth responded to Shaykh Zuhayr by suggesting that an exchange of *ijāzas* would be more appropriate.[43] This is an indication of his humility and the respect he had for the shaykh.

An Amazing Dream

The meeting between Shaykh Zuhayr and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was by a pillar in Masjid Nabawī behind the *ṣuffa* (raised platform) between Maghrib and ʿIshāʾ. At that time, Shaykh Zuhayr's son was asleep at home [in Madīna Munawwara] and he had a dream in which he saw the Prophet ﷺ saying to him: 'You are asleep and my gathering is taking place in my mosque!' He awoke quickly, made *wuḍūʾ,* rushed to the mosque directly to the pillar he had seen in his dream. When he arrived, he noticed it was there that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was granting authorizations in ḥadīth to those present. He informed his father of

43 This is known as *tadbīj* in the terminology of the Ḥadīth scholars (translator).

the dream who, in turn, conveyed the glad tidings to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth who immediately began to cry. Shaykh Zuhayr was so delighted and impressed at meeting Shaykh al-Ḥadīth that he later invited him home for a meal and requested him to teach Nawawī's *al-Arbaʿīn*. Shaykh Zuhayr obtained written authorization for himself, his son-in-law and his daughter, and later praised Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in the following words, 'The like of this shaykh is rare, most rare.' He went on and mentioned to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's students who were present, 'Hold firmly to him . . . firstly, because of his faith (*īmān*), then because of his love of the Prophet ﷺ, then because of his knowledge.'

Shaykh Zuhayr has written many books, including a marginalia (*taʿlīqāt*) on *Musnad Aḥmad*. He gifted copies of these to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and on the opening page of his *al-Qawl al-mufīd fī 'l-dhabb ʿan Jāmiʿ al-masānīd* he wrote:

> In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is due Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and salutations upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ, and all his Family and Companions ؓ. This is a gift presented to Our liege lord *Mawlānā* Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi, the great scholar of ḥadīth. May Allāh protect him with goodness and well-being. In request of his *duʿāʾs* and guidance.

Zuhayr ibn Nāṣir al-Nāṣir
Masjid Nabawī, Madīna Munawwara
Dhū ʾl-Ḥijja 2, 1420 | March 9, 2000

Other Shaykhs

There are many other scholars with whom Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has enjoyed a good relationship: Shaykh Asʿad Allāh, rector (*nāẓim*) of Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm, Saharanpur, whose company he sat in; Muftī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Lājpūrī senior muftī of Gujarat, India, who gifted him some volumes of

his famous *Fatāwā Raḥīmiyya;* Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Ajmērī; Ḥājī Bhāi Padia, *amīr* of the Tablīgh Jamāʿat in South Africa (may Allāh have mercy on them); Shaykh Niʿmat Allāh Maʿrūfī, senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband; Muftī Muḥammad Saʿīd Pālanpūrī, senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband; Ḥāfiẓ Patel, *amīr* of Tablīgh Jamāʿat in the UK (may Allāh protect them).

Chapter 4

PRAISE FROM OTHER SCHOLARS

Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar (may Allāh protect him)

Correspondence from some contemporary scholars is reproduced below, from which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's lofty status can be ascertained. Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar (may Allāh protect him) is the spiritual guide of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and displays great affection for him as can be seen from the following correspondence.

Letter 1

My respected, beloved Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. Your lovely letter has been received, heart and mind are delighted.

> Blessed it is when a loved one meets his beloved
> Such was the feeling between Laylā and Majnūn

It is hoped from your sincerity that you will soon be honoured with a great nearness to Allāh. I make wholehearted *duʿāʾ* everyday that Allāh Most High bestow on this lowly one and all you beloved ones that level of faith (*īmān*) and closeness of the true and faithful friends of Allāh (*awliyāʾ ṣiddīqīn*), after which the status of prophethood begins. The door of prophethood is closed, but the doors to the upper echelons of the *awliyāʾ ṣiddīqīn* are open. It was after this realisation that the

Physician of the Umma and Reviver of the Faith Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) took an oath and then recited this couplet:

The cloud of mercy still scatters precious pearls
For the wine and winery of divine love still stand

Your correspondence is a substitute for sitting in the company of the spiritual guide (*murshid*). Therefore, every month, writing a letter of this type is to ascend the stages of the Path (*sulūk*).

Keep walking the path you tread
for you are moving in the right direction

Mawlānā Ḥusayn Bhayyat phoned with glad tidings of you; he said that your talks are such that it is as though I am giving them. May Allāh increase you in abundance and bless you. My soul has multiplied a hundred fold upon hearing this delightful news. How wonderful it is that the Knower of Allāh Mawlānā Rūmī has said:

The more you remain before me, the greater is my fortune
My soul multiplies a hundred fold when I meet you

Meeting the beloved of the religion (*dīn*) is a strong means of religious progress, and upon meeting you my soul really has multiplied a hundred fold.

The time for your gathering is an appropriate one. May Allāh Most High spread and complete the outpouring (*fayḍ*) of your spiritual retreat (*khānqāh*) and your efforts in the field of spiritual reformation. If Allāh wills, my trip to Reunion is anticipated to be after fifteenth August.

Our first spiritual guide, Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) used to say that for the completion of the path to Allāh, love for one's spiritual guide is the key to all stages; 'O Allāh,

verily I ask You for Your love, and the love of those who love You, and love of that deed which will give me Your love.' Therefore, loving those in love with Allāh is a strong means and connection toward attaining the love of Allāh and [the performance of] good deeds.

With peace and honour. . . .

Letter 2

My respected, beloved Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him).

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

Mawlānā! Your beloved letter has delighted the heart and caused the soul to experience a state of ecstasy. Congratulations are due for your loving zeal.

> I have tested the far-sighted mind
> Thereafter, I had driven myself insane

Those loving poems which you have asked of me at the *multazam* are indicative of your association (*nisba*) and the heartache (*dard-e dil*) which has been conferred upon you. I now have strong hope, Allāh willing, that the fragrance of the love of Allāh will spread throughout the world from you. May Allāh Most High bestow upon you the honour of His acceptance.

You have bestowed discipleship (*khilāfa*) upon two *ʿālims* (scholars). With Allāh's grace, I pray that He takes great service of His Religion from my beloved ones and the disciples of my beloved ones, and grant them acceptance. May this also be a means of perpetual charity (*ṣadaqa jāriya*) for me.

May you be accepted for the level of purifying the souls [of others] (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) that is from the objectives of the prophetic mission. I was delighted to hear of the blessings [of the additions] to the chain (*silsila*). May Allāh Most High employ you for the spreading of this prophetic *sunna* of enlivening this work of purifying the souls in a

perfect manner, as alluded to in the Qurʾān by the verse 'and he would purify them' (*wa yuzakkīhim*). *Āmīn*.

Letter 3

My respected, beloved Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I have received your letter and accompanying publications. I am sending this reply through Dr. Muḥammad ʿUmar. I was delighted to receive your letter, and your books are a cause for great joy. May Allāh Most High through His mercy grant you acceptance and make it a means of continuous charity, *Āmīn*. May He also bestow upon me and all my beloved ones and their associates external and internal progress and fulfil every good intention. I request you to make *duʿāʾ* for blessings in my health and age so that I live until one hundred and twenty! I also request you and all my beloved ones to pray for my health and wellbeing so that I may deliver services to the religion in the best way, and pray that it is accepted from me in a like manner.

With peace and honour. . . .

Letter 4

In the name of Allāh, Most High.

My respected, beloved, Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi, *muḥaddith* of Darul Uloom Azaadville.

May Allāh increase your knowledge and inspire you toward further good works. Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

Your letter was received and from the details of your journey, your external and internal progress has delighted the heart. May Allāh increase you in abundance and bless you. I make *duʿāʾ* for further such progress. Your mention of my commentary of the verse *'jāhadū fīnā'* [Qurʾān 26:29] from *Tafsīr Rūḥ al-maʿānī* was most pleasing. This connection through knowledge is a sign of love for one's spiritual guide.

Our spiritual guide, Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) has mentioned, 'Love for one's shaykh is the key to all stages of the spiritual path.' I pray to Allāh that He grant you progress in attaining closeness to Him and the manifestations *(tajalliyāt)* of the Divine proximity, and may it be always be ample, continuous, abundant and evident. *Āmīn.* May He also take us all to the highest stages of the *awliyāʾ ṣiddīqīn,* which is attainable only through His grace, without us meriting it.

Your journeys to *Bayt al-Muqaddas* and visiting the graves of the Prophets, great Companions ﷺ and noble *awliyāʾ* (may Allāh have mercy on them) have caused my heart great pleasure and delight. May Allāh accept all our journeys and your journeys and all our efforts and all your efforts with His grace. Your *duʿāʾ* for me that I live until one hundred and twenty in good health and wellbeing, with the guidance for good deeds has pleased the heart, and your hearty love is cause for great joy. May Allāh Most High reward you in the best of manners and accept your *duʿāʾs.*

With peace and honour. . . .

Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd Nuʿmānī, Karachi (may Allāh have mercy on him)

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Respected Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi,

May Allāh inspire you and I to that which He loves and is pleased with. Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

All praise is due to Allāh that your letter dated Muḥarram 21, 1412 (August 2, 1991) has been gladly received together with your introductions to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī,* which coincidently, arrived whilst the quarterly examinations were taking place. I therefore reviewed both works personally. You have referenced them well and although my reading was in haste, I highlighted places I felt were in

need of correction. I looked at the introduction to *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* in one sitting and the introduction to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in two.

The Ḥanafī scholars should also focus on their [Ḥanafī] works. To focus all one's abilities on books of [juridical] dispute seems inappropriate. Shaykh Abū ʾl-Wafāʾ has made great efforts in this regard. There are countless Ḥanafī works in Istanbul. You should travel there if you have the financial means. While only four volumes of Imām Ṭaḥāwī's *Mushkil al-āthār* have been published, the complete set is to be found there. Efforts should be made to edit (*taṣḥīḥ*) the manuscripts and bring the remaining volumes into print. I recommend you complete Shaykh Yūsuf Dihlawī's *Amānī ʾl-aḥbār,* or undertake the referencing (*takhrīj*) of *Musnad Khawārizmī* or any other appropriate work. You are still young; I don't know whether an academic institute can be established there or not. If you get the opportunity on your return journey please visit Karachi and, Allāh willing, we shall talk about this in more detail.

The questions which you attached in your letter dated Dhū ʾl-Ḥijja 11 have been answered below:

1. Concerning the section of *Maʿārif al-Sunan* (6:292), *Bāb mā jāʾa fī ʾl-ṭīb ʿinda al-ḥalāl qabl al-ziyāra,* your observation regarding Shaykh Binnōrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) is correct. He has erred and the mistake is not that of Shaykh Mubārakpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him). I have also checked *Muwaṭṭa' Imām Muḥammad* for this.
2. When the purpose of *istinjāʾ* is purification, the obligation (*wujūb*) of it is then obvious. This obligation is only in the case where the impurity has exceeded its place of exit (*makhraj*), whereas in normal circumstances it is an emphasized (*mu'akkada*) *sunna* whether with water or stones. I was unable to fully comprehend your question and what exactly you meant.
3. Your observation is correct; *Nukat* was compiled before *Sharḥ al-Nukhba.*

Shaykh Saʿīd al-Ḥaq Qāsmī (may Allāh protect him)

An extract of a letter from the famous *ʿālim* of Mau and author of numerous books Shaykh Saʿīd al-Ḥaq Qāsmī (may Allāh protect him) to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth states:

> I have sent you three books and the fourth, *Tadhkira ʿUlāmāʾ-e Mau* is currently being prepared and you have also been included in it. I have attached some questions and hope you will reply in full. Your respected father and his accomplishments have also been listed in detail.

He writes in another letter:

Dear Respected Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I hope you are well. A few days ago I received your letter via some friends, and reading it left no end to my happiness. I thank you profusely for the kind words of affection. Having read your letter, the thought immediately came to mind that I should request you to write a review for my forthcoming book. I would be most grateful if you oblige. A few others have also forwarded their reviews, but yours is most necessary, without which the book would be incomplete. I hope that upon receipt of this letter, you will put pen to paper and take the trouble of forwarding it to me at your earliest convenience.

And peace be with you. . . .

Shaykh ʿMarghūb ʿAḥmad Lājpūrī (may Allāh protect him)

Letter 1
To: Respected Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him).
From: Marghūb Aḥmad, Dewsbury.

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I hope you are well. All praise is due to Allāh, I am well. The purpose of my writing is to bring to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's attention that with the grace and mercy of Allāh I had the opportunity of performing *ḥajj* this year. Whilst in Madīna Munawwara the thought crossed my mind on numerous occasions that I should request you to complete Shaykh Yūsuf Binnōrī's work (may Allāh have mercy on him) *Maʿārif al-Sunan* and Shaykh Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhlawī's work (may Allāh have mercy on him), *Amānī ʾl-aḥbār,* to be entitled *'Takmila Maʿārif al-Sunan'* and *'Takmila Amānī ʾl-aḥbār'* respectively. Initially, I requested Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh protect him) to complete *Maʿārif al-Sunan.* However, the death of Shaykh Subḥān Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) has made this task difficult as Muftī Taqi has since then been given the task of teaching the whole of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* instead of just *Sunan al-Tirmidhī.* This coupled with his demanding travelling schedule means that it is very difficult for him to fulfil this task.

It was hoped from Shaykh Ḥabīb Allāh Mukhtār Shahīd (may Allāh have mercy on him) of Binnōrī Town that he would complete *Maʿārif al-Sunan.* Unfortunately, it was not meant to be. Currently, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth probably has the responsibility of teaching both *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* and [*Sharḥ al-Maʿānī* of] Ṭaḥāwī, but it is not far fetched that Allāh accept you for this great service to the blessed field of ḥadīth and allow the works of these two pious individuals to be completed on your hands. It is greatly hoped that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth will consider this proposal. I say without exaggeration that perhaps there is none more suited to complete this challenge than yourself. In an age where lack of enthusiasm and effort is the norm, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has been

bestowed with a great zeal for ḥadīth. The efforts through which your introductions to the various books of ḥadīth have been ordered strongly suggest that the depth and breadth of your knowledge, coupled with your passion for this field, leave you most suited to this task.

And peace be with you.

In request of your *duʿāʾs.* . . .

Letter 2 (An Extract)

I am currently occupied in ordering grandfather's *fatāwā*[44] (may Allāh have mercy on him). Two volumes are complete and i'm currently working on the third. Volume two comprises of *kitāb al-ṭahāra* and *kitāb al-ṣalāt,* in which I have included four of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's (Urdu) treatises: (1) *Qawma awr jalsa mē iṭmiʾnān kā wujūb awr un dōnō mē adhkār kā thubūt* (The obligation of composure in *qawma* and *jalsa* and the proof of the supplications in them both), (2) *ʿImāma, Tōpī, Kurtā* (Turban, Topee, Kurta), (3) *Ṣaḥīh awr munāsib tar masāfat-e qaṣr* (The correct and appropriate distance that necessitates shortening of prayer), (4) *ʿĪdayn kī namāz shaher kē bāhir maydān mē parhnā sunnat hē?* (Is it *sunna* to perform the two ʿĪd prayers outside of the town?).

I hope that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth agrees to their inclusion. I searched for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's treatise on *Shab-e barāʾat,* but could not find it. If he would be kind enough to forward it, then I would like to include it in the appropriate volume.

44 This is a reference to the famous *Fatāwā Raḥīmiyya* by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Lājpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him).

Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā
(may Allāh protect him)

In his foreword on page 4 of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's publication, *Namāz kī pābandī awr uskī ḥifāẓat* (Punctuality in prayer and safeguarding it), Mufti Aḥmad Dewlā writes:[45]

> The author of this book, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him) is the son of my teacher. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was a teacher of ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel and, praise be to Allāh, owing to his God-given talent and abilities, he was accepted wholly as a point of reference during his tenure there. Having rendered great and lofty services at Jāmiʿa Dabhel, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is currently the most senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Azaadville, South Africa. Together with his current services to ḥadīth, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is also doing praiseworthy work in the fields of *tablīgh* and *iṣlāḥ* (spiritual rectification). If it is said that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has conceived this publication on the fundamental needs of the people of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh,* gathering the relevant rulings of prayer, then it would not be untrue.
>
> Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is also the distinguished disciple (*khalīfa*) of Shāh Ḥakīm Akhtar (may Allāh protect him) and plays an indispensable role for many in the line of spiritual rectification and guidance (*irshād*). In Africa also, he carries the torch of spiritual rectification held by the elders. May Allāh accept all Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's efforts for the Muslim Umma, whether academic or spiritual, in the field of *daʿwa* or *tarbiya* (education), and may He grant him progress which increases by the day. *Āmīn.*

45 Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā is from Jāmiʿa ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, Jambusar, Bharuj, India.

A Poem in Praise of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth by Shaykh Taha Karaan, Cape Town, South Africa

سَلاَمُ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ثُمَّ رَحْمَتُهُ ... مَوْلاَنَا فَضْلَ الرَّحْمٰنِ أَيُّهَا الأَعْظَمِي

شَيْخَ الْحَدِيْثِ أَطَالَ اللهُ عُمْرَكُمُوْ ... تَحْيَى الْعُلُوْمُ بِكُمْ حَيَاةَ مُحْتَرَمِ

جَزَاكُمُ اللهُ عَنْ جَنُوْبِ إِفرِيْقِيَا ... خَيْرًا لِمَاَ فَاضَ لَهَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ نِعَمِ

قَدْ كَانَ عَلْمُ الْحَدِيْثِ عِنْدَنَا مَيِّتًا ... فَجِئْتَ تَنْفُخُ فِيْهِ الرُّوْحَ بِالْقَلَمِ

وَبِدُرُوْسٍ عَلَى الصَّحِيحِ مُتْقَنَةٍ ... تُنَوِّرُ الْقَلْبَ مَعْ إِثَارَةِ الْهِمَمِ

لِلّٰهِ دَرُّ فَقِيْهٍ حَافِظٍ ثِقَةٍ ... دَاعِيَةٍ لِلْهُدٰى يَنْبُوْعٍ لِلْحِكَمِ

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يُنْكِرُ الْفَضْلَ الْعَظِيْمَ لَهُ ... وَالْفَضْلُ أَشْهَرُ مِنْ نَارٍ عَلٰى عَلَمِ

فَهَلْ تَرٰى صَاحِبِيْ لَهُ نَظِيْرًا هُنَا ... يُشَارِكُ الشَّيْخَ فِيْمَا فِيْهِ مِنْ شِيَمِ

وَلاَ يَحْزُنْكَ الَّذِيْ بَدَا مِنَ افْوَاهِهِمْ ... إِذْ لاَ يُبَالِي الْمَلِيْئُ بِمِرَا الْمُعْدَمِ

يَا أَيَّهَا الْقَوْمُ قُوْمُوْا نَاصِرِيْنَ لَهُ ... وَشَاهِدِيْنَ لَهُ بِالْمَنْصِبِ الْأَعْظَمِ

وَأَسْقِطُوْا يَاءَ النَّسَبِ مِنْ نِسْبَتِهِ ... قُوْلُوْا: أَعْظَمُ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ كُلِّهِمِ

إِنْ رُمْتَ تَذْكُرُ فِي زَمَانِكَ عَالِمًا ... مُتَضَلِّعًا فَابْدَأْ بِذِكْرِ الْأَعْظَمِي

وَلِيَ الْحَدِيْثَ فَصَارَ شَيْخَ شُيُوْخِهِ ... وَالْقَلْبُ مِنْهُ إِلٰى التَّأَلُّهِ يَنْتَمِي

زَادُوْهُ إِيْذَاءً فَزَادَ تَحَمُّلاً ... اَللهُ أَكْبَرْ! هٰكَذَا الْخُلُقُ السَّمِي

May the peace of Allāh be upon you and His mercy
O *Mawlānā* Fazlur Rahman Azmi

The Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, may Allāh prolong your life
Through you knowledge lives a life of honour
May Allāh reward you on behalf of South Africa
For favours that streamed unto it due to you
The knowledge of ḥadīth amongst us had died
And then you came breathing new life into it with your pen
And with expertly delivered lessons on the *Ṣaḥīḥ*
Giving light to the hearts and kindling resolve
What an excellent jurist, *ḥāfiẓ,* seat of trust
A caller to the Guidance, a spring of wisdom!
Who would deny his great erudition
When that erudition is plainer than a fire on a mountain?
O my friend, do you see anyone here like unto him
Sharing the virtues which the Shaykh possesses?
And be not grieved by what some have said
For what does he who brims (with knowledge) care
for the heckling of the deprived?
O my people, rise to his defence
And bear witness to his great station
And remove the *yāʾ* of attribution from his surname
And say, 'The greatest of all the people of knowledge'
Should you wish to remember a scholar of your time[46]
Thoroughly robust in knowledge, then begin with Azmi
He took charge of ḥadīth and became the Shaykh of its Shaykhs
While his heart remained attached to pious devotion
Their spite towards him increased, and he increased in forbearance
Allāhu Akbar! That is the sign of sublime character

46 The last three lines have been adapted from a poem in praise of ʿAlā al-Dīn al-Qūnawī.

Shaykh Rashīd Aḥmad Pānchbhāiyā (may Allāh protect him)

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.[47]
Dear Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him), Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, Darul Uloom Azaadville.

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I hope you are well. I present this humble book in your service in the hope that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth will write and forward his valuable impressions. Allāh has employed this lowly one for researching, referencing and numbering the *Durūs al-balāgha* and which, with all praise to Allāh, has now been published. The first edition has ran out and the new edition that includes some additions is under preparation. Its Urdu commentary, with all praise to Allāh, has also been prepared and will soon be published. I will send both these books to you soon, if Allāh so wills. Please pray to Allāh that he eases and quickens all the stages of publication and grant it general acceptance. *Āmīn.*

Though I haven't officially received the honour of being a student of yours I did refer to the notebooks of some of your students, whilst teaching *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ,* and was delighted. After reading these beneficial notes, the depth of your ingenuity was imprinted in my mind and heart. In this regard, I am indebted to you. I therefore thank you in abundance and am most grateful.

Requesting your pious *duʿāʾs.* Peace be with you.

A Letter from a Student

One of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's students went to Darul Uloom Deoband to listen in on the ḥadīth lectures (*samāʿa*) after graduating from Azaadville. An extract from his letter addressed to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is as follows:

47 Shaykh Rashīd Aḥmad Pānchbhāiyā is a lecturer at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel.

> In this lesson we sit and listen, but the enjoyment that we gained with you is not found here. The well researched lesson and the interest you generated cannot be found elsewhere. We thank you because you did so much for us by creating the consciousness of the science of ḥadīth and other fields of knowledge, thus inculcating its importance and value in us. Due to our weaknesses we were unable to benefit from you fully but we are thankful for the little we did.
>
> We make *duʿāʾ* to Allāh that He removes your illness and grant you good health so that you can be of service to even more people and so that people can derive benefit from you. May Allāh protect you completely from the jealousy of the jealous ones.

Muftī Muḥammad Fārūq Mīrathī (may Allāh protect him)

He writes:[48]

> From amongst the scholars is Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi who teaches *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and who previously was a teacher of ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Taʿlīm al-Dīn, Dabhel. He is worthy of mention here and of whom the term "mountain of knowledge" is most appropriate (*Ifrīqiyā awr khidmāt-e Faqīh al-Umma* 1:161).

Shaykh Abrār Aḥmad Dhulyawī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī writes:

> Once I accompanied Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi in London to

48 Muftī Muḥammad Fārūq is a senior disciple of Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him).

visit Mawlānā Abrār Aḥmad Dhulyawī, the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of [Falāḥ al-Dārayn] Tarkeshwar (may Allāh have mercy on him). After shaking hands and embracing, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth mentioned to him that he was planning to go for *ʿumra* and requested him to make *duʿāʾ* that his visa would be granted. Mawlānā Abrār Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) replied, 'If the *faḍl* (grace) of al-Raḥmān (Most Merciful) is with Faḍl al-Raḥmān, then what is the need to worry about a visa?' (*Ḥayāt-e Abrār* pg. 229).

Chapter 5

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's publications, both short and long, number around forty. Here is a list of them. They are in Urdu unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Sīrat-e Imām Abū Yūsuf* (A biography of Imām Abū Yūsuf). This is a translation of ʿAllāma Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī's *Ḥusn al-taqāḍī fī sīrat al-Imām Abū Yūsuf al-Qāḍī* (An Excellent Litigation: The life of Imām Abū Yūsuf, the Judge).

2. *Tīn ṭalāq sē mutalliq kisī ghayr muqallid kī kitāb ka radd* (A response to a *ghayr muqallid* book about three divorces in one).

3. *Muqaddima ʿIlm-e qirāʾāt awr tadhkira aʾimma qurrāʾ-e ʿashara awr unkē ruwāt* (An introduction to the science of Qurʾānic recitation and the lives of the imāms of the ten modes of recitation and their narrators).

4. *Tārīkh-e Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya Dabhel* (A history of Jāmiʿa Dabhel).

This was first published in India and then in Pakistan.

5. *Qawma awr jalsa mē iṭmiʾnān kā wujūb awr in dōnō mē adhkār kā*

thubūt (The obligation of composure in *qawma* and *jalsa* and the proof of the supplications in them both) (Urdu and English).

This book is exemplary and the extent of acceptance which Allāh has granted it can be gauged from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's own words:

> All praise is due to Allāh, as I'm sure you must have noticed, this book is a summary of the research conducted by Imām Ṭaḥāwī, ʿAllāma Ibn ʿĀbidīn al-Shāmī, Shaykh al-Hind, ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and ʿAllāma Shabbīr Aḥmad ʿUthmānī (may Allāh have mercy on them). When this book was prepared the first thing my father (may Allāh protect him) did was take it to Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) to approve, and he did so wholeheartedly. Then, when the book was presented to Muftī Taqi Usmani for review (may Allāh protect him) he gave his full support and wrote: "Due to the fact that it includes the research of ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (may Allāh have mercy on him), I have also been inclined to support this view for some time now." Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh protect him) published his [Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's] work in his magazine al-Balāgh of Karachi (see *al-Balāgh,* Jumādā Thāniya 1414 (December 1993)).[49] Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmzai (may Allāh have mercy on him) (an eminent scholar of Jāmiʿa al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya, Binnōrī Town, Karachi) wrote a review of the book and expressed his support. After this, the book was published in Pakistan, with two editions in India. The Head Muftī of Darul Uloom Deoband, Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi (may Allāh have

49 Muftī Taqi was not asked to publish the article by the author but decided to do so himself, suggesting that he was impressed with the research and wished that others would educate themselves and put it into practice. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was not even aware that it was to be published in *Al-Balāgh* until after its publication. I [Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi] have also heard some very pious individuals praising the work in Madīna Munawwara. In 1424 AH, Muftī Taqi visited South Africa and said at the time that he had studied this issue before, together with ʿAllāma Kashmīrī's opinion, but did not focus on it too much at the time. However, after reading Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's booklet on the issue he became more inclined toward it and began practice on in. He added that the reward for this would go to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

mercy on him) also wrote a review of it.[50] Once Mawlānā Saʿīd Aḥmad Khān (may Allāh have mercy on him), the head of Tablīgh Jamāʿat in the Ḥijāz (Saudi Arabia), visited South Africa. I presented this book to him in a gathering of scholars and he was delighted and said: "In this issue the *ghayr muqallidīn* are better than us." He would take the book with him wherever he travelled and would encourage the imāms especially to lead their prayer with composure.

A year ago Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn [of Pakistan] (may Allāh have mercy on him) came to the Durban *ijtimāʿ* and I presented the book to him. He then read a portion of this book to the scholars, in particular, to those who were from India. Then, when he was in Maputo, Mozambique for another *ijtimāʿ* he also read the book to the scholars and commented that the research was excellent. A reliable scholar also mentioned to me that Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh have mercy on him) also raised the issue at Raiwind Markaz, adding that people from all walks of life were making this mistake. A student of mine who is currently spending one year in *tablīgh* mentioned this incident to me.

When I gave this book to Mawlānā Ibrāhīm Dewlawī (may Allāh protect him) he read it and we discussed the issue for a while. He mentioned that it would be practiced upon at the Nizamuddin Markaz. All praise is due to Allāḥ that the *qawma* and *jalsa* there are now done with repose.

The book was also sent to Mawlānā Jamīl (may Allāh protect him) of Raiwind [Markaz] who leads the prayers there and delivers the talks in the absence of Ḥājī ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (may Allāh protect him). Some students of mine who were there wrote to me saying that he performs *qawma* and *jalsa* with composure and allows enough time for the appropriate *duʿāʾs* to be recited. They also added that he mentions this point in his talks and encourages it. When he was asked on the issue by some students he replied, "Since I have received the book, I drive the point home in my talks with regard to the importance of this issue."[51] If the beloved ones of

50 He concluded with: *'Al-salāmu ʿalaykum wa ʿalā man ladaykum',* Peace be upon you and upon those that are with you (i.e., agree with you).

51 An extract from the letter written by the student states: 'I [Mawlānā Jamīl] have

tablīgh have adopted this *sunna* then, if Allāh wills, it will spread to all four corners of the world.

Another student of mine published a second edition in Pakistan. Therefore, since the first English edition is also being prepared, I have felt the need to pen a few thoughts and feelings on the issue and to ultimately thank Allāh in abundance for the acceptance He has granted this book.

May Allāh reward our senior scholars of Deoband, whose hearts Allāh had bestowed with the enthusiasm to set the Umma right. Some refuted *Ārya Samāj*,[52] others Shiism, others Mawdūdism, and some Raḍākhānism. ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) robustly refuted Qādiyānism and worked tirelessly for thirty years in proving that the Ḥanafī *fiqh* is in accordance with the Ḥadīth. Allāh opened his heart to the importance of this issue as well [i.e., repose in the postures of prayer] and he continuously raised the issue in his lessons on *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*.[53] The efforts of our pious were not in vain and if Allāh wills this *sunna* will live. May Allāh give us the good fortune of reviving each and every *sunna* and may He make this revival a means of our salvation. *Āmīn.*

6. *Hadiyyat al-darārī li ṭālib Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (*Muqaddima-e Bukhārī*)

This book is an introduction to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and is a collection of

thought about the fact that there was something lacking in prayer, but after reading the book whenever I speak on prayer, I first explain this issue and do so emphatically.' He repeated this last sentence twice and then went on to say, 'Please convey my *salāms* and gratitude [to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth], I am most grateful.' (He also said this twice.) Then, two days ago, on Thursday, it was his [Mawlānā Jamīl] talk after Fajr and after discussing the *kalima* moved onto prayer and said: 'One should not just perform *ṣalāt,* but should do so correctly; every posture should be performed in a composed manner.' He then explained *qawma* and *jalsa* and recited the *duʿāʾs* and added that no one should go without having first rectified this aspect of their prayer.' May Allāh guide us all to practice, *Āmīn*.

52 A reformist movement within Hinduism that retains traditional Hindu beliefs in reincarnation and karma, but rejects worship of idols and argues that Hinduism is in essence monotheistic.

53 A copy of this book was also sent to ʿAllāma Anẓar Shāh Kashmīrī, son of ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh (may Allāh have mercy on them) who is the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Deoband (*Waqf*). He read it fully and then published it in his magazine *Muḥaddith-e ʿAṣr.*

valuable notes dealing with all the important topics that are discussed before commencing the book itself. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd Nuʿmānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) read through this and the introduction to *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* thoroughly. He added marginalia in a few places and these have been included in the book. The Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Darul Uloom Deoband, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaq Azmi's (may Allāh protect him) comments about this book [Introduction to *Bukhārī*] were: 'This book is beneficial to students and teachers alike and is a testament to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's knowledge of ḥadīth.'

Shaykh Niʿmat Allāh Maʿrūfī (may Allāh protect him) lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband writes:

> The proof of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's deeply rooted knowledge and sincerity in action can be ascertained from the fact that he has written explicitly: "We simply collate and gather the crumbs (of knowledge) from the predecessors (*mutaqaddimīn*) and taking our begging bowls, we wander around their servings of knowledge and research." Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has taken the essential points and has skilfully presented them in an ordered fashion, supplying us with so much information that this book suffices and one does not need to look elsewhere. Some matters are such that to find all details about them in one book is difficult. [For instance,] the ḥadīths of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* are they *mufīd al-yaqīn* [i.e., do they give the benefit of conviction]? In this regard he has gathered evidence from both sides and coupled them with the research of senior scholars (may Allāh have mercy on them) in a most adept manner. Furthermore, he has maintained reverence and respect for both parties involved to the extent that every reader will be assured of the research of the senior scholars of Deoband.

Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmzai of Pakistan (may Allāh have mercy on him) writes:

> This book is in print here as we speak and if Allāh wills the teachers and students will benefit from the well-researched discussions in the book. I'm

> afraid I am unable to write in detail due to my illness, but Allāh willing the excellence of this book will become clear from the tributes which will no doubt ensue from the people of knowledge.

7. *Hadiyyat al-aḥwadhī li ṭālib Jāmiᶜ al-Tirmidhī* (*Muqaddima-e Tirmidhī*).

This introduction to *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* was described by Muftī Saᶜīd Aḥmad Pālanpūrī (may Allāh protect him) with the following acclamation:

> I have read passages of the book from numerous places and was delighted. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has collected some excellent material. I took particular liking to two discussions: the first is a detailed narrative on the terminology employed by Imām Tirmidhī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and the second is the addition of brief biographies of the various narrators. . . .

Shaykh Riyāsat ᶜAlī Bijnōrī a lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband writes:

> Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (*muḥaddith* of Madrasah Arabia Islamia Azaadville, South Africa) writes authoritatively on the lives and works of the outstanding and distinguished ḥadīth scholars during the era of ḥadīth compilation. In this regard, some of his books have already been published, with many scholars and those in the teaching profession holding them in high esteem.

He then says:

> One excellent aspect of the book is that all the information on Imām Tirmidhī has been compiled together, along with the valuable opinions of the illustrious scholars regarding his personality and works. Along with this, the book is structured in a very praiseworthy way . . . .

8. *Tanwīr al-ḥāwī fi tadhkirat al-Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī* (*Muqaddima-e Ṭaḥāwī*).

This book, a biography of Imām Ṭaḥāwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and an introduction to his *Sharḥ al-Maʿānī* was described by Muftī Saʿīd Pālanpūrī in the following manner:

> Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi has written on this subject. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is a great scholar and an accepted teacher who has collected excellent material in his book. I have had a quick glance at the draft version and will study and benefit from it in detail after publication. For the accuracy of the book and its contents, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's name alone is a guarantee. . . .

9. *Namāz kī pābandī awr uskī ḥifāẓat* (Punctuality in prayer and safeguarding it) (Urdu and English).

Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā, Principal of Jāmiʿa ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, Jambusar, Bharuj, writes:

> This book, on the blessed subject of prayer has been written keeping in mind the lofty purpose of its rectification and execution. All praise is due to Allāh that this subject has been treated in such a comprehensive manner that it is similar to filling an ocean into a cup.

Shaykh Ismāʿīl Bharkodrawī (may Allāh protect him) also writes:

> In short, this book with regard to prayer is brief yet comprehensive and is of great benefit. Every Muslim male and female should study this book in order to perform prayer in the correct manner, according to the Sunna. . . .

10. *Muqaddima ʿilm-e ḥadīth maʿa tadhkira Imām Baghawī wa Ṣāḥib-e Mishkāt* (An introduction to the science of ḥadīth with accompany-

ing biographies of Imām Baghawī and the author of the *Mishkāt*) (Unpublished).

11. *Muqaddima ʿilm-e tafsīr maʿa tadhkira Imām Suyūṭī wa Imām Maḥallī wa Qāḍī Bayḍāwī* (An introduction to the science of Qurʾānic exegesis with accompanying biographies of Imām Suyūṭī, Imām Maḥallī and Qāḍī Bayḍāwī).

12. *Shab-e barāʾat kī ḥaqīqat* (The reality of the fifteenth of Shaʿbān) with an appendix *Pandharwī Shaʿbān kē rōzē kē bārē mē mērē mawqif kī sarguzasht* (My position on fasting on the fifteenth of Shaʿbān) (Urdu and English).

Shaykh Salmān Nadwī (may Allāh protect him) writes about this book:

> There is a need to discuss the correct *sharʿī* (legal) position of issues of this type and others that have been adopted by the Muslims. Let alone the public, some scholars insist on some of these [unfounded practices]. It is commendable that you have explicitly written on the subject, although the author was forthright, the point highlighted was totally in order.

Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh protect him) also agreed on the issue covered in this work. In his spiritual discourses (*Iṣlāḥī khuṭbāt*), he mentioned that the fast [of the fifteenth of Shaʿbān] is not *sunna* and for this reason the classical jurists in their books have not mentioned this particular fast in their lists of the *sunna* fasts.

13. *Ṣaḥīḥ awr munāsib tar masāfat-e qaṣr* (The correct and appropriate distance that necessitates shortening of prayer) (Urdu and English).

In this book the shaykh establishes that the correct *masāfat-e qaṣr* is 89 km (48 *sharʿī* miles, 54 conventional English miles).

14. *ʿImāma, Tōpī, Kurtā—aḥādīth awr aslāf kē aqwāl wa aʿmāl kī rōshnī mē* (Turban, Topee, Kurta—in light of the ḥadīths and the sayings and practices of the pious predecessors) (Urdu and English).

15. *ʿĪdayn kī namāz shehr kē bāhir maydān mē parhnā sunnat hē?* (Is it *sunna* to perform the two ʿĪd prayers outside of the town?) (Urdu and English).

All praise is due to Allāh that after the publication of this book many places have implemented the congregation of ʿĪd prayer outside of the town.

16. *Khuṭbāt-e ḥajjat al-widāʿ* (Farewell sermons of the Prophet ﷺ) with translation and brief commentary (Urdu and English).

17. *Muḥarram awr ʿĀshūrāʾ* (Muḥarram and *ʿĀshūrāʾ*) (Urdu and English).

18. *Imāmat sē mutaʿalliq kuch aham awr ḍarūrī hidāyāt* (Some important advices regarding leading prayer).

19. *Dhārī, mūnch, bāl kē masāʾil* (Rulings of the beard, moustache and other hair).

Originally an Arabic article on the beard written at the command of Shaykh Hāshim Bukhārī Gujaratī Muhājir Madanī (may Allāh have mercy on him). Shaykh Hāshim also took responsibility for its publication but passed away a few days after it was completed. Later, it was published in Urdu and English with some additions.

20. *Tuḥfat al-ṭalabāʾ Sharḥ Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* (Gift to the students: A Commentary of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ*).

This commentary was written by two scholars from the UK, Shaykh

Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī and Shaykh Thamīr al-Dīn Qāsmī. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth edited the entire book and wrote an introduction. This is the first commentary of *Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ* [in Urdu] and is short but wide-ranging.

21. *Tansīq al-niẓām fī adillat al-aḥkām li ṭalabat al-madrasa al-kirām* (Systematic arrangement of proofs of laws for honoured *madrasa* students) (Arabic).

This has been published by Madrasah Arabia Islamia Azaadville and is currently part of the syllabus at the institute.

22 and 23. Urdu translations regarding the composure of the postures in prayer (the *rukūʿ, sajda, qawma* and *jalsa*) of the Arabic work of ʿAllāma Barkawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) entitled *Muʿaddil al-ṣalāt* (Rectifier of prayer) and that of Mullā ʿAlī Qārī (may Allāh have mercy on him).

24. *Kiyā tablīghī kām ḍarūrī hē?* (Is the work of *tablīgh* necessary?).

25. *Ṣāḥib-e hidāya kā tadhkira* (Biography of the author of the *Hidāya*).

26. *Tadhkira-e Imām Ibn Māja wa Imām Nasāʾī* (Biographies of Imām Ibn Māja and Imām Nasāʾī). Includes chains of transmissions.

27. *Tadhkira-e Imām Muslim* (Biography of Imām Muslim). Includes reference to: his excellence in scholarship and worship; authored works; 12 specialities of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; detailed explanation of *muʿanʿan* (transmitted with the preposition *ʿan*) ḥadīths; preference for his *madhhab* (way); commentaries and marginalia of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*; Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's chain of transmission to Imām Muslim; brief biographies of the narrators in the chain.

28. *Sīrat-e Imām Abū Ḥanīfa* (Biography of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa). Includes reference to: his acquisition of knowledge; teachers; students; scrupulousness and piety; worship; status in ḥadīth scholarship; his clarification of [the opinion of] ḥadīth scholars; the specialisms of Ḥanafī law (*fiqh*); his students in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*; his chains of transmission; parting advices.

29. *Sīrat-e Imām Muḥammad* (Biography of Imām Muḥammad al-Shaybānī). This is a translation of ʿAllāma Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī's *Bulūgh al-amānī fī sīrat al-Imām Muḥammad al-Shaybānī* (Attaining aspirations: the life of Imām Muḥammad al-Shaybānī).

30. *Mawāʿiẓ-e thalātha* (Three advices). A description of three lectures on the effort of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* by Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyib.

31. The obligation of *taqlid*. In English.

32. Preservation and integrity of hadith. A translation in English of a work by Muḥaddith Kabīr Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi.

Articles

1. *Afḍal al-dhikr fī ithbāt al-rakʿatayn baʿd al-witr* (The best reminder of the proof of two *rakʿas* of prayer after *witr*).

2. *Talkhīṣ targhīb al-mutalāqiyayn fī ʾl-muṣāfaḥa bi ʾl-yadayn* (A summary encouraging those who meet to greet with both hands).

3. An Urdu translation of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Dihlawī's *Mā yajibu ḥifẓuhu li ʾl-nāẓir,* outlining the different classifications of ḥadīth books.

4. *Tāḥqīq-e ḥadīth 'Awwalu mā khalaqa Allāhu al-qalam'* (Research of the ḥadīth: 'The first of the creation of Allāh was the pen').

5. *Dalāʾil tark rafʿ-e yadayn* (Proof of not raising one's hands during prayer) (in chart form).

6. *Qirāʾat khalf al-imām* (Reciting Qurʾān behind the *imām*).

7. *Waḍʿ al-yadayn taḥt al-surra* (Placing both hands below the navel in prayer).

8. *Arbaʿu rakʿāt baʿd al-ʿIshāʾ* (Four *rakʿas* after ʿIshāʾ).

9. *Aḥādīth al-ṣalāt qabl al-Jumuʿa* (Ḥadīths pertaining to prayer before the Friday prayer).

10. *Waqt al-Ẓuhr, awwaluhū wa ākhiruhū* (The time of Ẓuhr: beginning and end).

11. *Mahr-e Fāṭimī awr mahr-e azwāj-e Nabī ﷺ kī maqādīr* (The dowry of Fāṭima and the wives of the Prophet ﷺ).

12. *Qabrastān mē murdō kēliyē hāt uthā kar duʿāʾ māngnē kā thubūt* (The evidence for raising hands and praying for the deceased at the graveyard).

13. *Khulāṣa-e ṣaḥīḥ wa munāsib tar masāfat-e qaṣr* (A summary of the correct and most appropriate distance that necessitates shortening of prayer).

14. *Namāzō kē baʿd hāt uthā kar duʿāʾ māngnē kā thubūt* (The evidence for raising hands in *duʿāʾ* after prayer).

15. *Masʾala-e taqdīr* (The issue of predestination).

All these articles have been published together in one volume entitled *Majmūʿ-e maqālāt* (A compilation of treatises). The Arabic and Urdu articles are separate.

16. *Maqāsid-e biʿthat* (*daʿwat*, *taʿlīm*, *tazkiya*) (The objectives of Messengers: inviting [to Allāh], educating, purifying).

17. *Hidāyāt barā-e mustarshidīn* (Guidance for those seeking the Path [to Allāh]).

18. *Hidāyāt barā-e ṭalaba* (Guidance for students).

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth's oft-quoted poems [in Arabic, Urdu and Persian] have also been compiled and published under the title *Ganjīna ashʿār-e maʿrifat* (A treasure of poems in recognition of the Divine). Some works have been written during travels to the Holy Sanctuaries, others in mosques, another blessed place or at a blessed time, for example, during the night vigil (*tahajjud*) time.

May Allāh send salutations on the best of His creation, Muḥammad ﷺ his family and all his Companions ﷺ. All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

Atiqur Rahman Azmi
Azaadville, South Africa
Jumādā Thāniya 1, 1434 | April 12, 2013

Glossary

Ārya Samāj. A reformist movement within Hinduism that retains traditional Hindu beliefs in reincarnation and karma, but rejects worship of idols and argues that Hinduism is, in essence, monotheistic.

Akbar (pl. *akābir*). Older, more senior in rank. Often used in reference to senior Muslim scholars.

ʿAllāma. Great learned scholar.

ʿĀlim (pl. *ʿulamāʾ*). Scholar, one who has been thoroughly trained and received teaching authorizations in the major Islamic sciences.

Anjuman. Assembly.

ʿAshara. Literally 'ten.' It is sometimes used to refer to the ten modes of Qurʾānic recitation, i.e., *qirāʾāt ʿashara.*

Balāgha. Arabic Rhetoric.

Bayʿa. Oath of allegiance.

Barelwis. Adherents to the Barēlwī school of thought.

Dard-e dil. Heartache.

Dawrat al- ḥadīth. Final year of the *ʿĀlim* Course in which the six main books of ḥadīth are studied.

Deobandīs. Adherents to the Deoband school of thought.

Dhikr (pl. *adhkār*). Remembrance of Allāh.

Dīn. Religion (Islam).

Duʿāʾ. Supplication.

Fajr. Prayer performed between true dawn and sunrise.

Fayḍ. Outpouring or blessing.

Gasht. Literally 'walk' or 'stroll.' When used in reference to Tablīgh Jamāʿat it denotes going out to meet fellow Muslims.

Ghayr muqallid (pl. *ghayr muqallidīn*). One who does not adhere to any school of thought in Islamic law.

Ḥadr. Applying the laws of Qurʾānic recitation (*tajwīd*) under the supervision of a qualified *Qārī.*

Ḥāfiẓ. One who has memorized the Qurʾān. Also used for a ḥadīth master, one who has memorized one hundred thousand ḥadīths.

Ḥajj. Major pilgrimage.

Ḥalāl. Permissible according to Islamic law.

Ḥanafī. Follower of the Ḥanafī school of thought.

Ijrāʾ. Applying the laws of the *Qirāʾāt Sabʿa* (or otherwise) to ones recitation.

Ijtimāʿ. Gathering.

ʿIlm. Sacred knowledge.

Imām. Derived from the Arabic word 'to lead,' *imām* is widely used for the leader of the prayer or the leader of school of thought in Islamic law.

Iqāma. Call for the commencement of prayer.

Iṣlāḥī taʿalluq. Reformative relationship.

Iṭmiʾnān. Composure, particularly in *ṣalāt* for the purposes of this book.

Jalsa. Gathering or sitting position between two *sajdas* (prostrations).

Jamaat-e-islami. An Islamic political party in Pakistan founded by Abul Ala Mawdudi.

Jamāʿat. Group or congregation (for prayer etc.). *See also Tablīgh Jamāʿat.*

Jamāʿat khāna. Temporary mosque or prayer area.

Jumuʿa. Friday or Friday prayer.

Juzz. (pl. *ajzāʾ*). Portion (esp. of the Qurʾān).

Kalima. Literally 'word,' also used in reference to testimony of faith.

Khānqah. A place for spiritual retreat and reformation under the supervision of a spiritual guide.

Maʿmūl (pl. *maʿmūlāt*). Habitual practices.

Maktab. Children's *madrasa* or Qurʾānic school.

Mas'ala (pl. *masā'il*). Proposition or juridical ruling of Islamic law.
Mashwara. Consultation.
Masjid. Mosque.
Matn. Text.
Mawdūdism. Follower of Abul Ala Mawdudi.
Mawlānā. Literally 'our leader,' used as a title of respect.
Molwī. Graduates from an Islamic seminary.
Muḥaddith (pl. *muḥaddithūn*). A scholar of ḥadīth.
Mulāqāt. Meetings.
Munshī. This refers to the art or an expert in the art of writing and calligraphy.
Muqtadī. Person performing prayer behind an *imām* in congregation.
Nafl. Supererogatory practice.
Naḥw. Arabic grammar.
Nāẓim. Rector.
Nāẓira. Recitation of the Qur'ān whilst looking inside.
Nikāḥ. Marriage.
Nisba. Connection.
Qārī (pl. *qurrā'*). One who recites, esp. the Qur'ān. Also used for an expert in the various forms of Qur'ānic recitation.
Qawma. Standing position after *rukū'*.
Qibla. The direction of the Ka'ba in Makka towards which Muslims face in prayer.
Qirā'a. Qur'ānic recitation.
Raf' al-yadayn. Literally 'raising of the two hands.' Used in reference to raising of the hands before changing postures in prayer.
Raḍākhānīs. Followers of Aḥmad Raḍā Khān. See *Barēlwīs.*
Sab'a. Literally 'seven.' It is sometimes used to refer to the ten modes of Qur'ānic recitation, i.e., *qirā'āt sab'a.*
Ṣadaqa jāriya. Perpetual charity.
Ṣāḥib. Sir. Used as a title of respect in Urdu or Persian.
Samā'a. Listening (esp. of ḥadīth transmissions).
Sanad (pl. *isnād*). Chain of transmission.

Ṣarf. Arabic morphology.

Sayyid/sayyidunā. Liegelord/Our Liegelord. Title of respect.

Shaykh (pl. *mashāʾikh*). Spiritual or religious leader.

Shērwānī. A long coat-like garment worn in South Asia.

Ṣiḥāḥ sitta. The six authentic books of ḥadīth: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, and *Sunan Ibn Māja*.

Ṣuffa. Raised platform in the Prophet's Mosque in Madīna Munawwara.

Sulūk. Spiritual path.

Sunna. Precedent and custom; the actions and practices of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The second source of Islamic sacred knowledge called ḥadīths. Also used for acts of the category between *wājib* and *mustaḥab* in Islamic law (*fiqh*).

Taʿlīq (pl. *taʿlīqāt*). Explanatory remark or marginalia.

Taʿwīdh. An amulet, often hung around the neck or placed in the home in which verses of the Qurʾān are written as a means of attaining blessing or protection from evil spirits.

Tablīgh jamāʿat. Renowned Islamic missionary movement.

Tajwīd. Science of Qurʾānic recitation.

Tarāwīḥ. Twenty *rakʿas* of *sunna* prayer performed after the *farḍ* of ʿIshāʾ during the month of Ramaḍān.

Taṣawwuf. Islamic Spirituality.

Tawfīq. Guidance or inspiration.

Tazkiyat al-nafs. Purification of the self.

ʿUmra. Minor pilgrimage.

Ustādh (pl. *asātidha*) Teacher or Lecturer (esp. in Islamic sciences).

Wajd. A state of spiritual ecstasy.

Appendix 1

Map containing places regularly referred to in this book.



Appendix 2

Recollections of my father (may Allāh have mercy on him)
by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)

If you wish to keep the wound of the chest fresh
Then repeat occasionally the story over and over

I recollect the home of my (paternal) grandfather, Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Saʿīd where numerous children would come for *nāẓira* (initial reading) of the Qur'ān. Mother and father (may Allāh have mercy on them) would teach them free of charge; such practice was common at that time. I also completed the *nāẓira* of the Qur'ān at home.

In nearby Khiri Baagh, Madrasa Taʿlīm al-Dīn was founded. Shaykh al-Islām Mawlānā Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī (may Allāh have mercy on him) came and stayed at a family member's house. I had the honour of shaking his hand. When I returned home I told my (paternal) grandmother that Mawlānā's hands and feet were as soft as chapatti dough.

I was the first student at Madrasa Taʿlīm al-Dīn and my father (may Allāh have mercy on him), was its first teacher. I read the Qur'ān from sūrat al-Fātiḥa to Qārī Muṣṭafā (may Allāh have mercy on him) - my father used to teach is his madrasa. A few days after, my father-in-law to be, Qārī Munshī Muʿīn al-Dīn became a teacher there. In one year, I completed three stages of the primary curriculum. Thereafter, I went to study at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm and completed my studies there.

My father (may Allāh have mercy on him) was heavily involved in the work of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh* in those days. He once said: 'People

at that time did not know the effort of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh*; there was a need to expose them to it. Therefore, we used to do four *gashts* (meeting fellow Muslims) and four daily talks (*gasht* before Ẓuhr, ʿAsr, Maghrib and ʿIshāʾ, and the talk after each one of them).'

During my travels in April 2009, an old *tablīghī* friend, ʿAzīz al-Raḥmān Garhast mentioned: 'your father was part of the first *jamāʿa* from Maunath Bhanjan to spend forty days'.

My grandfather's home was rather limited in size and there was a need to acquire land, build a house, and for us to move there. However, due to my father's commitments and dedication to the effort of the religion, this was delayed. As we got older, my father purchased a plot of land in Raghunathpura and this is where our house now stands. Once a few rooms had been built, we moved there. The door had grass thatching, with the seating area just there; the rest was enclosed.

When I got married, only tea and biscuits were served at my *walīma* (marriage feast). There was no meat, rice or chapattis. As we got older, and began working, more rooms were added to the house.

Index

Other English publications by

MADRASAH DAʿWATUL HAQ

Ṣalāt- Is Yours Correct?

The Sunna of the Muṣallā (ʿĪdgāh)

Farewell Sermon of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ

Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī and the Tablīgh Jamāʿat

Shab-e Barāʾat: The Fifteenth of Shaʿbān in the Light of the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth

Daʿwa, Taʿlīm and Tazkiya: Three Tasks of Rasūl Allāh ﷺ

Laws of the Beard and Hair in the Light of the Aḥādīth

Muḥarram and ʿĀshūrāʾ: Virtues and Laws

Turban, Kurta, Topee

Qawma and Jalsa

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